Truth Matters:

An Assessment of Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

Through the Case Study of the George W. Bush's

Administration's

War on Terrorism

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Abstract

The discourse of the war on terrorism of the George W. Bush administration is used as a case study and a platform to assess the ideas of Michel Foucault on discourse analysis and power. Foucauldian notions prove to be useful tools for highlighting several aspects of the discourse, such as the link between knowledge and power, the construction of the concept of the terrorist, the role of identity in regards to security practices, or biopolitics as the management of life in the context of the war on terrorism. However, a number of specificities in regards to power relations and discursive practices escape a Foucauldian approach. These are revealed by stressing the importance of agency, facts and events for discourse analysis; and by complementing a Foucauldian perspective with the perspectives of alternative authors, such as Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda, Giorgio Agamben or Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, among others.

The process of assessing Foucauldian discourse analysis allows to simultaneously accomplish a secondary objective of analyzing the discourse of the war on terrorism itself.

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Introduction

The George W. Bush administration, which now approaches the end of its term, enjoyed the sympathy of the world population as a result of the tragic attacks of September 11, 2001. Since the events, however, the sympathy has increasingly eroded and turned to dislike and hatred. The rhetoric of Bush, his government officials and the supporting neocons that crafted the phrase "war on terror" could have been initially taken as hyperbolic, but had to be interpreted ever more literally after the months that led to the wars of Afghanistan and Iraq. Particularly the latter was not welcomed by a large number of people and a considerable number of foreign governments, unhappy at the apparent contempt towards the United Nations and its laws, and the weak arguments for an invasion. Similarly, liberal and left wing sections of the United States population itself resented draconian laws and discourse. The unpopularity of the Bush administration reached its climax with the Abu Ghraib leaked photograph scandal, the increasing knowledge of the living conditions of occupied Iraq and the nature and practices of Guantanamo Bay.

Thus, the leap from what first appeared to be hyperboles to grim realities demanded an analysis by journalists, historians, social and political scientists.

For a critical examination of the discourse of the war on terrorism, the work of Michel Foucault seemed like a promising platform for its critical stance and its remarkable focus in power and historical circumstances. The parallels between his observations on the subject of the social alienation of minorities such as madmen or homosexuals – the ways in which social conditions became identity – and the current construction around the notion of the terrorist were already apparent without a detailed comparison. His contribution in highlighting disciplinary practices in Western societies suggested a

relationship with similar practices of the war on terrorism within the US and in the prisons in Guantanamo and Iraq.

For these reasons, this project began as an attempt to make use of Foucauldian theory on discourse analysis to examine the US discourse of the war on terrorism. As the project proceeded, my understanding of the subtleties in Foucault's work increased and so did my appraisal of the overall process of the generation of the discourse of the war on terrorism. While the perspective from Foucault proved to be very useful to understand some key points – such as the construction of the very concept of terrorism and the terrorist, or the genealogy of the American mindset of security and their role in the world – I was dissatisfied with how little I could find in Foucault that could explain certain characteristics of the subject that seemed to me to be of great significance. These were very specific practices related to specific groups of people and the way they talked about concrete events. It seemed to me that Foucauldian concepts such as genealogy, governmentality or biopolitics helped a great deal but were insufficient to describe, let alone explain, that which has given the war on terrorism its uniqueness; or to put it in Foucauldian terms, that which has marked it as a discontinuity.

It may be that I found myself within a problem of research observed by Colin Wight:

> As a result of the contemporary fascination with epistemology, students are encouraged to adopt a theory as they move through their intellectual career. These theories then become identities that determine what research is deemed important, and how it is to be conducted. At times, this is not a problem and often the best research is conducted by a researcher totally committed to, and immersed within, a particular theoretical perspective. The problem occurs when it is forgotten that this is only one way to look at the issue, or that only a minute part of a complex

object has been examined. When this happens, the researcher is apt to think they have arrived at a complete and overarching account of the world that is applicable to all outcomes. Once this occurs, grand theory quickly follows and with it outlandish claims to universality, parsimony and overarching frameworks of explanation.[1]

I could not make a coherent and parsimonious whole out of my analysis through the use of Foucault alone – much less a universal whole. As a result I found myself struggling more with Foucault than with the original task at hand. Upon rereading my own work, I realized that in some points I followed Foucault closely, but in others I became so critical and in fact departed so much from him that eventually the question emerged of why I was using his work in the first place, and if there wouldn't be any other approach which could more effectively achieve my original goal. Still, I was reluctant to discard him completely; I found other theories, such as Marxism, even less satisfying or even simplistic in their understanding of power, and not very easy to incorporate as a coherent complement to Foucault. There were a few exceptions, for example: Giorgio Agamben's notion of bare life and the *homo sacer*[2], which I read as a reasonable expansion of Foucault and original enough in its own right; and Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's idea of a hegemonic discourse.[3] Agamben, however, was useful to describe only a certain number of practices related to the war on terrorism, such as the management of human lives through torture in the context of exceptional spaces or circumstances, but did not have much to add to my own concerns on power and discourse. Likewise, Laclau and Mouffe

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1   Colin Wight, *Agents, Structures and International Relations: Politics as Ontology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 295

2   Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer, Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995)

3   James Martin, 'The political logic of discourse: a neo-Gramscian view', History of European Ideas 28 (2002): 24, 25; Laclau, Ernesto, and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and socialist strategy: towards a radical democratic politics* (London: Verso, 1985)

described a few aspects of interest to me about the limits of a discourse and its confrontation with other alternatives, but were still not satisfying enough when dealing with problems concerning truth and its production in discourse.

Having expressed these issues to my supervisors and after their useful feedback I realized that the dialogue that I was having with Foucault was in itself interesting enough to make it the central subject of the thesis. Thus, it was decided that the discourse of the war on terrorism would not be discarded, but instead of being the prime subject of the analysis, it would serve as the case study upon which Foucault could be tested. The main focus of the project became then an assessment of Foucauldian theory as a tool for discourse analysis, while the former objective of reaching a better understanding of the war on terrorism became a secondary goal.

The pursuit of two goals in one thesis is justified because of their interconnectedness. The first one is not an assessment of Foucault in general, but of its relevance and usefulness to a particular case study; therefore I do not discard the possibility that Foucault may provide a better or worse tool of analysis for cases of a different nature. Similarly, the second objective is achieved with the help of Foucauldian theory where appropriate, and complemented by other theories and works that can be read as developments from or commentaries on Foucault, as well as my personal reflections.

The main points where I depart from Foucault are the following:

Power

Foucault insisted that in order to examine power we must give up previous understandings of class

struggle that focused on ruling classes or systems, and replace them with an examination of power as it is manifested at its capillary extremes. A broad understanding of power structures was to be replaced by what he called a microphysics of power.[4] This is what he meant with his call to 'cut the king's head off'.[5] Furthermore, power was to be understood in more dynamic and ubiquitous terms, like a currency exchanging hands through a complex social system, not the exclusive property of a class or group of people.

Power is relevant in this project because it is intrinsically related to discourse, knowledge and their production. Therefore, the question of who or what holds power, or how it is manifested in the context of the discourse of the war on terrorism within the US, is an essential departing point. In principle, it could be the case that no particular agent holds any more power than any other and that the discourse emerges as the product of the whole of social and historical interactions. This is true to some extent, but only in as much as the discourse of the war on terrorism borrows from previous American discourses of identity and security, such as those related to Cold war, immigration or the war on drugs.[6] It is not true, however, as long as we accept that certain specific groups of people, with particular ways of understanding the world and the place of the US within it, currently hold a disproportionate amount of power as compared to others within the country. What I see as the most direct producer of the discourse of the war on terrorism is a loose network of power with neoconservatism at its centre.[7] It is not a class

4   Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972-1977* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980): 96

5   Jan Selby, 'Engaging Foucault: Discourse, Liberal Governance and the Limits of Foucauldian IR', *International Relations*, 21 (2007): 329

6   David Campbell, *Writing Security, United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998)

7   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone: The Neo-Conservatives and the Global Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)

in Marxist terms, nor is it a monolithic group controlled by one or a few masterminds. It is true – following Foucault – that their power is variable and dynamic, and subject to change with historical circumstances. But it is a network of power after all, one which has contributed significantly to the specific shape of the discourse. This group is equivalent to the head of the king, and – contrary to Foucault – I do not believe that an analysis would be complete if we were to cut it off.

Chapter 2 argues in favor of an adequate description and understanding of this network of power and its ideology. In as much as Foucault was not interested in ideology, this represents another movement away from him.

Truth and events

According to Foucault, power produces knowledge and they directly imply each other,[8] and therefore it is ultimately truth itself that is produced in relation to power. This is an assertion that requires explanation as it is counterintuitive to classical understandings of epistemology that truth can be produced, instead of learned or discovered, and it is the same for knowledge, which should be acquired. At first sight, it appears that Foucault's statement suggests that there is no distinction between truth and falsehood, and no way to decide between opposing statements, and therefore that he is advocating an extreme form of relativism where 'anything goes'. However, this would not really do justice to Foucault, as a deeper understanding reveals that what he is really arguing is that the world as we understand it – and therefore our understanding of the objects within it – is dependent on assumptions,

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8   Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London: Penguin Books, 1977): 27; Michael Gold-Biss, *The Discourse on Terrorism, Political Violence and the Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism*, 1981-1986 (New York: Peter Lang, 1994): 17

frameworks and discourses determined by and interrelated to power. In other words, that which we come to regard as 'truth' for all intents and purposes is accepted as such because of its extension into social interactions of power.

This is indeed the case when we are dealing with complex or abstract concepts and notions (especially in a political context), such as 'democracy', 'independence', 'freedom' or 'terrorism'. Indeed, the fact that the 'truth' about terrorism is determined by social discourses which are assumed and accepted by large segments of Western societies because of and in regards to relations of power, while we wrongly believe it to be based on science or simple knowledge in good faith, is quite relevant and useful for an understanding of the discourse of the war on terrorism. The realization that there is no 'terrorism' as such – that is, there is no object in the world that is intrinsically terroristic, but rather interpreted events or constructed objects in such a way by large segments of society – is a solid platform on which to understand our post 9/11 world.

However, when dealing with simple events, things or concrete verifiable facts about the world, it is not true that what is said of them constitutes 'truth' or knowledge only in relation to the social structures of power. Bombs explode, people die, crimes are committed, words are spoken, weapons are smuggled – or they are not. Thus, it would be a mistake to read too much into Foucault and conclude that even specific events are constructed, rather than constituting in themselves verifiable objects of the world, or that they are not important.

The above should be obvious, and it should also be clear that it was not Foucault's intention to take

things that far. His own historical works do not suggest such a thing.[9] So why is it relevant to even spell out the observation here? Because when examining specific examples of how the discourse of the war on terrorism is constructed or manifested by the personalities that compose the network of power relations, we find that they do not feel constrained by concrete events, and often misrepresent them if they need those facts to match their assumptions. This is a surprising discovery; it is common knowledge that people in positions of power 'spin' the facts in order to give them a convenient interpretation, but it is something else altogether to misrepresent them to the point that they bear little to no relationship to the original events. The 2003 invasion of Iraq was based on the argument that Saddam Hussein held weapons of mass destruction that represented an immediate threat to the world, and that he was in alliance with al-Qaeda. Both turned out to be wrong.

It is my belief that the questions of *who* and *how* are relevant to the discourse. In other words, if the *specific network of power* and their *misrepresentations of facts* had not been at the heart of the war on terrorism, the way it was conducted by others would have probably shared similar characteristics, but they would have not been taken to some of the extremes that we have witnessed. Some sort of strong response or retaliation against an identifiable enemy would have probably been necessary to satisfy the historical American identity; perhaps it was inevitable that Afghanistan would be invaded. But the form that the retaliation took and a further invasion of Iraq sustained on such arguments seem to have come directly from the neoconservative way of thinking; an ideology already interested in Iraq as a target, in US global supremacy among its goals, and which was apparently influenced to some extent by the Straussian notion of 'noble lies' and the creation of myths as legitimate strategies of government. The use of lies and myths, and therefore the identification of some of the possible ideological origins of

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9   See for example Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The birth of the prison*

neoconservatism, would not be revealed if we did not stress the fact that specific and objective events do happen in the world, and that they can be misrepresented.

Furthermore, the role of lies and myths in the production of the discourse and their contrast with facts reveals the degree of *disproportionality*[10] of the discourse and again stresses the character of *agency* of the members of the network of power; two elements which enrich our understanding of discourse.

There is also a moral implication of the acceptance of the importance of simple verifiable facts and events apart from their meaning. When and if they are misrepresented, exposing the mismatch between words and facts provides a route for resistance to power in its modality of domination.[11] If we are to have hope of living in a reasonably fair and just modern society, then we cannot ignore the misrepresentation of the most basic facts. Resistance is actually in accordance with Foucauldian aspirations. In Foucault "a personal ethics of agency and refusal exists, which is separate from some obligatory link with political, economic or social structures. Foucault says that he is more interested in "politics as an ethics" than politics."[12] Highlighting the existing gap between discourse and empirical facts may be the most promising possibility for refusal and resistance of the abuse of power.

The subject of truth, its production, the issue of empirical facts and the themes of the discourse is covered in chapter 3.

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10   The notion of disproportionality in the context of social analysis was proposed by Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics: The Social Construction of Deviance* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994): 36

11   Foucault identified domination as a particular modality of power in which asymmetrical relationships left little room for manoeuvre for subordinated persons because their margin of liberty is extremely limited. See Barry Hindess, *Discourses of Power: from Hobbes to Foucault* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996): 102

12   Frank Pignatelli, 'Dangers, Possibilites: Ethico-Political Choices in the Work of Michel Foucault', *Philosophy of Education* (1993)

Socio-historical and political specificities

Foucault was much concerned with the specifics of society and history. By using an empirical method, he analyzed specific historical procedures, institutions, techniques and strategies of power. In contrast, I believe that specificities should also refer to concrete people and groups of power, their geopolitical and ideological agendas, their concrete actions and use of language, and the contrast with the actual facts to which they make reference. This is a theme that runs throughout the whole thesis, particularly in chapters 2 and 3.

When Foucault was reproached for not presenting an overall theory he replied that such a task would be both "abstract and limiting" and that his desire was rather "to *open up* problems that are as *concrete* and *general* as possible".[13] Like Foucault, my analysis has no desire to propose a theory, but rather to examine a concrete problem. Unlike him, I seek to highlight specifics rather than generalities; the reason being that otherwise the uniqueness of the discourse of the war on terrorism would be lost. As Jan Selby has written in an enlightening article on the use of Foucault within the discipline of International Relations: "[T]he critique or deconstruction of ideological categories need not rule out all analysis of structural socio-historical specificities – and it is in this sense that there exists an ontological specificity and irreducibility to the international".[14] In this case, the specifics are directly related to the network of power in which we find the neoconservative group at its core.

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13   Bent Flyvbjerg, 'Habermas and Foucault: thinkers for civil society?', *British Journal of Sociology* 49-2 (June 1998)

14   Jan Selby, 'Engaging Foucault': 338

Foucault proposed to analyze the management of human life in Western societies. He observed that human beings have been understood as biological entities which need to be administered massively in terms of health, population, birth rates, immigration, movement, and so on. The practice of managing human life is read by Foucault as a historical step further from previous practices of discipline, which managed human bodies in specific contexts, such as hospitals, schools, prisons, workplaces or the army, and which involved among other things the practice of surveillance as a method for discipline, following Jeremy Bentham's model of the Panopticon.[15]

All these remarks have turned out to be very useful to highlight aspects of modern Western societies that would otherwise be still partially understood if the social sciences had stuck in Marxist or classical models of power. They have also confirmed and highlighted that power is indeed at work even in peaceful and democratic societies. But what happens when societies – democratic or otherwise – adopt discourses of war and danger? In *Society Must Be Defended* Foucault discussed this issue to some extent, by proposing the argument that Nazi Germany predicated the extermination of a different race – the Jews – upon the idea of biological survival, which constitutes the rationale of biopolitics taken to the extreme.[16] Again, these are very valuable insights, but I believe that the work of Giorgio Agamben is more to the point, while still being fairly logically compatible with Foucault.

Perhaps it could be said that the point of incompatibility comes when Agamben characterizes the power

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15   Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*: 200-202

16   Michel Foucault, *Society Must be Defended, Lectures at the College de France, 1975-1976* (New York: Picador): 241-244, 255

of the *sovereign* as its ability to render bare life. It would be incompatible with Foucault because, again, Foucault is reluctant to make an analysis of sovereignty, i.e. the king's head. But it is not a logical contradiction. What Agamben argues is that the essence of sovereign power is that it can declare states of emergency and spaces of exception where human life is stripped of its social qualities and its rights as individual political entities, thus becoming nothing more than bare life, biological entities with as much value as any other, and therefore potential subjects of death. From this it follows that torture or injury can and is often used on human beings who find themselves in these states of emergency or spaces of exception, such as concentration camps.[17]

From this brief summary of Agamben we can already see how much it is relevant to some of the most scandalous manifestations of the war on terrorism – manifestations which can easily be understood as material and practical elements of the discourse, as I believe they should. Consider the practices of torture by US authorities in the Iraqi prison of Abu Ghraib and the camp of Guantanamo Bay in Cuba.

These subjects are covered mainly in chapter 4.

Social Antagonism in discourses

As already noted above, Foucault's understanding of discourse as a conglomerate of assumptions and interpretations that are taken for granted to the point that they are considered science or self-evident truths, which determine even our perception of complex objects and concepts (such as 'terrorism' or 'democracy') is an outstanding contribution which provides a solid platform from which to begin to

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17   Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer*

approach the discourse of the war on terrorism.

However, I do not believe that this idea should be taken to the extreme in the context of political science, as we would then find ourselves without any possibility of even *thinking* critically about any particular discourse. Even Foucault's observations would be determined by it, thus preventing any reasonable analysis. From a philosophical perspective, it is possible that there is a meta-discourse that predetermines everything and anything that human beings can ever conceive of; but for the purpose of political analysis we are safe to admit that there are several opposing discourses to be explored. The war on terrorism, after all, has been widely criticized both from within and outside the US, and I find this opposition both fascinating and productive. I believe that a comparison of the discourse of the war on terrorism with opposing discourses can shed some valuable insights on the discourse itself. Although I am not sympathetic towards the discourse of the war on terrorism, my purpose here is not to endorse alternative discourses, but rather to explore some of the ways in which the dominant discourse reacts to and characterizes the opposition, in order to understand how it pretends to characterize itself.

This is not a project that Foucault ever carried out, although some of his observations hint at the possibility of examining discourses in their opposition. Rather, it is in the work of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe that we find a theory that provides a useful platform for analysis: that of hegemonic discourse, the constitutive outside and social antagonism.[18] As with the case of Agamben, I believe that the basic ideas of Laclau and Mouffe can be read as a logical expansion of Foucault, for they share some of the main starting points about the social interpretation of reality that constitutes discourse. The issue of what can be learned of the hegemonic discourse by examining the social antagonism is covered

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18   Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and socialist strategy: towards a radical democratic politics* (London: Verso, 1985); Jacob Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe and Zizek* (Blackwell, 1999): 99-101

in chapter 5.

These five major points of departure roughly correspond to chapters 2 to 5 of the thesis. This is where the arguments are developed, as the first chapter is simply a review of Foucauldian theory with an emphasis on power and discourse.

It should be made clear here that while there are major points of departure from Foucault, I remain an admirer of his work and in a great number of points I still follow him closely. Thus, this project is not a rejection of Foucault's work as a whole. Nor is it an attempt to weld classical political views with Foucault into one coherent general theory or method. Rather, it is an assessment of the usefulness of Foucauldian tools in the case of the war on terrorism point by point. In most cases Foucault's notions are not discarded, but expanded and complemented with views focusing on aspects of power and discourse that may not have been of particular interest to Foucault, but which do not constitute any logical contradiction with his work.

Finally, I make no secret of the fact that I undertake the secondary objective of this thesis – the analysis of the discourse of the war on terrorism – motivated by a personal concern at the way it has been conducted and the catastrophic consequences it has had for people in the Middle East, Asia and the US, as well as in other countries indirectly. Frank Pignatelli observes that several commentators read Foucault's analysis as a deep critique which discourages hope and denies the possibility of a progressive politics. Foucault responded that his position "leads not to apathy but to a hyper- and pessimistic activism." His cautious skepticism with regard to utopian politics does not prevent his desire "to preserve the possibility of agency and choosing to be otherwise, of moving against a life

constructed through, and regulated by, a normalizing mode of discourse-practice."[19] In this sense I remain Foucauldian.

The war on terror as an object of study

Before we proceed with a review of the work of Michel Foucault and the arguments that are to be developed in the subsequent chapters, a clarifying note on the limits of the war on terror as an object of study is required.

The first thing that needs to be understood is that the war on terror is an artificial construction which has been defined only vaguely through the discourse and its related practices, and is therefore subject to multiple interpretations. The themes of the war on terror resonate to different degrees on military operations on the mountains of Afghanistan as they do through American popular culture or security measures concerning bottles and liquids in passenger airplanes across the globe.

Because the limits of the war on terror as an object of study are by their nature indefinable, there are a number of possibilities open for research. The scope and rationale will be artificial as well; this is necessary in order to make the research intelligible. Perhaps the main research alternative is between bottom-up and up-to-bottom approaches. Should the discourse of the war on terror be approached by privileging its discursive manifestations among the population and the media, or should we focus primarily on those who make and carry out policies that in turn affect the population? Although there is no particular reason why a researcher could not choose the first option to highlight relevant aspects of

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19   Frank Pignatelli, 'Dangers, Possibilities'

the social phenomenon, the discourse of the war on terror as a whole has identifiable historical points of origin at the level of decision-making, as I will argue in chapter 2 – a fact that demands a first break with a traditional Foucauldian approach. Furthermore, many of the manifestations of the war on terror at the level of popular culture divert in different measures from the rationale behind official discourse and policy, to the point that in some instances we may wonder if what we witness are really expansions and reinterpretations of the discourse or rather critiques or different discourses altogether. For example, while we may find traces of the discourse of the war on terror in TV shows and movies like *Battlestar Galactica* or *Cloverfield*, we could reasonably argue that these elements relate just as much to classical science-fiction, disaster movies or apocalyptic religiosity – perhaps even more – and that if any elements of the war on terror remain, they are critical in nature and destabilizing to the discourse. This is not to say, of course, that popular culture cannot exert an influence on the discourse of policy-makers; merely that as an identifiable phenomenon, this discourse finds its clearest roots at the level of political power.

The war on terror has been characterized by its discourse as a global confrontation, and indeed we can find examples of its manifestations in many regions of the world. It is therefore pertinent to ask for its limits as an object of study in regional terms. Again we find that the contemporary version of the war on terror as a whole has been produced in a first instance in the US; thus the decision of focusing the research on this country, while not denying that the discourse is re-produced in others. Indeed, the preeminence of the US on this matter is confirmed by the fact that other countries that have resonated most strongly with the specific themes of the discourse are close allies, such as the United Kingdom and Israel, notwithstanding the fact that they have a history of discourses of counter-terrorism of their own.

Chapter 1

Foucault, Power and Discourse

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize and review the notions of power and discourse as understood by Michel Foucault, since they are at the centre of the two objectives of the thesis: the assessment of a Foucauldian approach as applied to the US war on terrorism, and an analysis of the discourse of the war on terrorism itself. Since this chapter serves only as an introductory platform, and the actual engagement with Foucauldian discourse analysis is to take place in subsequent chapters through the analysis of the war on terrorism, for the most part I avoid arguing with Foucault here, except for one general point about the limits of positive knowledge.[20]

Because it is more fundamental in Foucault, I begin with the idea of power rather than discourse.

1. Foucauldian power

As a brief introductory summary, Foucault's understanding of power is characterized by the following:

Instead of examining *who* possesses power, the aim is to determine *how* it is exercised. Therefore, the focus is not on the sovereign state, social classes or groups in power, but rather on the effects of power in everyday life at the micro levels of society.

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20 See point 2.1 further below: 'Discourse in science'.

Power does not need to be exercised in a fundamentally repressive manner. For example: Power can produce identity, knowledge and discourse; discipline is often positive in that it seeks to constitute specific individuals and their behaviour.

Government is defined as "conduct of conduct" and is a form of power that aims "to structure the possible field of actions of others".

Biopolitics is the activity of government characterized "by regulating a population by its biological processes", such as birthrates, mortality, etc. Thus, power becomes intrinsically linked to life.

Rationalities of government are practical rather than theoretical or discursive. There is a focus on the *technologies* of power.[21]

Foucault's understanding of power comes about as a theoretical reaction to structural theories (such as Marxism), which view power as the relationship between the elements within a division of society where well defined great structures may be found, such as the state, the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. Foucault's intention is clearly to approach the problem from a more flexible perspective, closer to individual agents, or rather, the practicalities of power. The result is a prioritization of micro manifestations of power – micro in comparison with the traditional grand structures. An analysis of power, Foucault says, "should be concerned with power at its extremities, in its ultimate destinations, with those points where it becomes capillary, that is, in its more regional and local forms and

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21   Christian Borch, 'Crime Prevention as Totalitarian Biopolitics', *Journal of Scandinavian Studies in Criminology and Crime Prevention* 6 (2005): 93. See chapter 4 for a more detailed discussion on the subject of biopolitics.

institutions".[22]

One of the consequences of taking distance from structuralism is that power becomes something which circulates and which functions in the form of a chain rather than a pyramid. Having mobility, similar to the blood flowing in the smallest veins, it is never localised in a certain place, "never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power".[23]

While Foucault places the centre of gravity of power on the microlevel of everyday life and away from formalism and structuralism, his contention seems to be more of a methodological than an ontological nature, as in principle he does not entirely dismiss the importance of the State:

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22   Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972-1977* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980): 96

23   Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*: 98. The focus on capillary power ought to be considered a great contribution to the social and political sciences, yet we cannot refrain from recognizing its weaknesses. As Edward Said has noted, even if one fully agrees with Foucault's view that the microphysics of power is exercised rather than possessed, notions such as class and class struggle, the forcible taking of state power, economic domination, imperialist war, dependency relationships, and resistances to power cannot be reduced "to the status of superannuated nineteenth-century conceptions of political economy… In short, power can be made analogous neither to a spider's web without the spider nor to a smoothly functioning flow diagram; a great deal of power remains in such coarse items as the relationships and tensions between rulers and ruled, wealth and privilege, monopolies of coercion, and the central state apparatus". Indeed, power relations within societies are better explained by a combination of both structuralism and capillary power than either by themselves. Said recognizes that Foucault's work is an important alternative to the ahistorical formalism with which he has been conducting an implicit debate, "but all that is quite another thing from accepting Foucault's view in History of Sexuality that "power is everywhere" along with all that such a vastly simplified view entails. For one, as I have said, Foucault's eagerness not to fall into Marxist economism causes him to obliterate the role of classes, the role of economics, the role of insurgency and rebellion in the societies he discusses". (Edward Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (London-Boston: Faber and Faber, 1983-1984): 221, 244) For a further discussion on the limits of capillary power, see chapter 2.

I don't claim at all that the State apparatus is unimportant, but it seems to me that among all the conditions for avoiding a repetition of the Soviet experience and preventing the revolutionary process from running into the ground, one of the first things that has to be understood is that power isn't localised in the State apparatus and that nothing in society will be changed if the mechanisms of power that function outside, below and alongside the State apparatuses, on a much more minute and everyday level, are not also changed.[24]

From the excerpt above we distinguish Foucault's reason for paying attention to the level of the micro and ignoring to some extent the importance of the State and related power structures: a concern for the possibility of change in society from the most basic level up, and a disbelief that movements inspired by Marxism can achieve this.

Following his desire to work from a different perspective, he proposes a political analysis that should not attempt to consider power from its internal point of view and that should refrain from posing the "labyrinthine and unanswerable question: 'Who then has power and what has he in mind? What is the aim of someone who possesses power?' Instead, it is a case of studying power at the point where its intention, if it has one, is completely invested in its real and effective practices."[25]

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24   Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*: 60

25   Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*: 97. I do not endorse Foucault's position on this point. The question of the aim of people in power is impossible to answer without a doubt since we cannot read people's minds; yet it seems to me that renouncing to it would have the effect of limiting our understanding of politics. I would prefer us to forget about our pretension of achieving absolute certainty on such a matter, and replace it with degrees of probability sustained by the available evidence. The question of the goal of power can be then answered based on the observable effective practices. It is not unreasonable to assume, for example, that a government is planning a war when an inordinate amount of resources is being invested on weapons and army. Yet it is true that we would never find enough evidence to prove that such is the goal.

A final criticism from Said is that Foucault's thinking on power is marked by an underestimation of historical forces such as profit, ambitions, ideas, or the sheer love of power. Furthermore, Foucault, with all his opposition to

1.1 *Discipline*

The idea of the microphysics of power highlights the importance of discipline; much of Foucault's work explores the history of its practice. He observes that from the nineteenth century up to our own day, modern Western societies have been characterised by a legislation, a discourse, and an organisation based on public right, whose principle of articulation is the social body and the delegative status of each citizen; but also "by a closely linked grid of disciplinary coercions whose purpose is in fact to assure the cohesion of this same social body."[26]

We find an example of Foucault's focus on discipline on his comments on war. It is said that war as strategy is a continuation of politics, and while Foucault doesn't deny this, he argues that 'politics' was conceived as a continuation of the military model as a fundamental means of preventing civil disorder. From this perspective, politics would be a strategy that makes it possible to understand the army as a principle for maintaining the absence of warfare in civil society. The classical age gave birth to the great political and military strategy by which nations confronted each other's forces; but it also saw the birth of careful military and political tactics – i.e. discipline – by which the control of bodies and

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traditional thought, remains bound to Euro centrism, according to Said. "He seems unaware of the extent to which the ideas of discourse and discipline are assertively European and how, along with the use of discipline to employ masses of detail (and human beings), discipline was used also to administer, study, and reconstruct – then subsequently to occupy, rule, and exploit – almost the whole of the non-European world." (Edward Said, *The World, the Text, the Critic*: 222)

Said's arguments continue: European intellectuals of the XIXth and XXth centuries have employed the word "Oriental" to designate a variety of regions, "despite the enormous ideological and political differences between them. The principal reason for this was the constitution of a geographical entity called the Orient, and its study called Orientalism, that realized a very important component of the European will to domination over the non-European world, and it made it possible to create not only an orderly discipline of study but a set of institutions, a latent vocabulary... a subject matter, and finally... subject races. The parallel between Foucault's carceral system and Orientalism is striking."

26   Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*: 106

individual forces was exercised within states.[27]

With his particular scepticism of ahistorical ideals and origins, Foucault says:

> Historians of ideas usually attribute the dream of a perfect society to the philosophers and jurists of the eighteenth century; but there was also a military dream of society; its fundamental reference was not to the state of nature, but to the meticulously subordinated cogs of a machine, not to the primal social contract, but to permanent coercions, not to fundamental rights, but to indefinitely progressive forms of training, not to the general will but to automatic docility.[28]

As with all forms of power, disciplines are the bearers of a discourse. But this is not the discourse of right, law, rule, or sovereign will. The disciplines may well be the carriers of a discourse that *speaks* of a rule, but this is not the juridical rule deriving from sovereignty, but a norm. Therefore, the code they come to define is not that of law but of normalisation. Foucault believes that the reference of these disciplines is to a theoretical horizon which has nothing in common with the construction or right; rather it is human science which constitutes their domain, and "clinical knowledge their jurisprudence".[29]

It is true that if disciplinary measures have developed to such varied extents and into so many different areas of social life, such as bureaucracy, hospitals, schools and prisons, it has been thanks to human sciences. However we must not forget that Foucault's analyses on both discourses and disciplines has

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27   Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London: Penguin Books, 1977): 168

28   Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 169

29   Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*: 106, 107

been built on specific manifestations directly or closely linked to the scientific sphere. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault admits he has privileged discourses that define the 'sciences of man', but the analysis of discursive events is in no way limited to such a field.[30]

At least three characteristics of mechanisms of discipline may be distinguished from *Discipline and Punish*:

1. *The functional inversion of the disciplines*. Disciplinary measures started as a way to neutralize dangers, to fix useless or disturbed populations, or to avoid the inconveniences of large groups of people. Later on, the same mechanisms were being used to play a positive role and to increase the possible utility of individuals.[31] This point is relevant for the present research, since the evidence suggests that disciplinary mechanisms and practices in the US that started as reactions to perceived terrorist acts may have surpassed their original function and meaning. This issue is further discussed in chapter 4.

2. *The swarming of disciplinary mechanisms*. Disciplinary mechanisms have a certain tendency to become 'de-institutionalized'. They emerge from the closed environments in which they once functioned and circulate in a 'free' state; the massive, compact disciplines are broken down into flexible methods of control, which may be transferred and adapted.[32] Perhaps the swarming disciplines

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30   Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, (London: Tavistock Publications, 1972): 30. It is fair to ask if the analysis would change, at least in part, if it were to be applied to situations not evidently related to scientific knowledge. I believe that we should be cautious not to overemphasize the link to science when analyzing other examples of political power. This does not mean that the role of science will disappear completely.

31   Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*: 210

32   Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*: 211

escape not only from the walls of a hospital or a prison, but they also shift the human group which constitutes the point of application.[33]

3. *The state-control of the mechanisms of discipline*. In England, it was private religious groups that for a long time carried out the functions of social discipline. In France, although a part of this role remained in the hands of parish guilds or charity associations, another part, the most important, was very soon taken over by the police apparatus. In taking over a number of pre-existing functions, such as the search for criminals, urban surveillance, or economic and political supervision, the police magistratures and the magistrature-general that presided over them in Paris transposed them into a single, strict, administrative machine.

The resulting police apparatus had to be coextensive with the entire social body in its details and not only by the extreme limits that it embraces.

> Police power must bear 'over everything': it is not however the totality of the state nor of the kingdom as visible and invisible body of the monarch; it is the dust of events, actions, behaviour, opinions – 'everything that happens'; the police are concerned with 'those things of every moment', those 'unimportant things' of which Catherine II spoke in her Great Instruction […][34]

Perhaps the most interesting of Foucault's comments on the functions of police is what he calls "useful

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33   In terms of the current war on terrorism, those who we would think of being legitimately suspect of such crimes are not the only ones to pay for them, for disciplinary mechanisms seem to be affecting entire races, members of a religious faith or countries. See chapter 3 for a further discussion on the discursive division between 'us' and 'them'.

34   Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*: 213

delinquency". Police power manages to supervise the existence of legal prohibitions that creates around it a field of illegal practices, while extracting illegal profits through elements, also illegal, but rendered manipulable. Arms or drug trafficking perform such a function or a similar one. Other examples in the political sphere, in use well before the nineteenth century, are informers and *agents provocateurs*. With the secret agents it procures, but also with the generalized policing that it authorizes, delinquency constitutes a means of perpetual surveillance of the population.[35]

> This delinquency, with its specificity, is a result of the system; but it also becomes a part and instrument of it. So that one should speak of an ensemble whose three terms (police-prison-delinquency) support one another and form a circuit that is never interrupted. Police surveillance provides the prison with offenders, which the prison transforms into delinquents, the targets and auxiliaries of police supervisions, which regularly send back a certain number of them to prison. The magistrates can say what they like; penal justice, with all its theatrical apparatus, is intended to respond to the daily demand of an apparatus of supervision half submerged in the darkness in which police and delinquency are brought together. Judges are the scarcely resisting employees of this apparatus. They assist as far as they can in the constitution of delinquency, that is to say, in the differentiation of illegalities, in the supervision, colonization and use of certain of these illegalities by the illegality of the dominant class.[36]

Indeed, what opportunity would the police force have to increase its capabilities of surveillance and control without delinquency? What need of force would society have without a threat? At the end of the eighteenth century people hoped for a society without crime, "and then the dream evaporated. Crime

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35   Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*: 280-281

36   Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*: 282

was too useful for them to dream of anything as crazy – or ultimately as dangerous as a society without crime. No crime means no police. What makes the presence and control of the police tolerable for the population, if not fear of the criminal? The institution of the police, which is so recent and so oppressive, is only justified by that of fear".[37] In this dynamic, Foucault adds, prisons play the role of "factories for producing delinquency, and delinquency is the raw material for disciplinary discourses."[38]

In the context of this research the above comments present a tempting opportunity to make a parallel dynamic: that of military force-war-terrorism. As the research develops we may certainly find similarities; particularly in the discursive theme of terrorism as an unprecedented threat.

1.2 Biopolitics

Foucault's analysis of techniques for "governing" individuals and "guiding their conduct" that appeared since the seventeenth century in domains such as the school, the army and the workshop, does gravitate around the law or myth of power, but concerns itself with the complex and multiple practices of a "governmentality" which presupposes "rational forms of technical procedures, instrumentations through which to operate and... strategic games which subject the power relations they are supposed to guarantee to instability and reversal."[39]

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37   Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*: 47, in Michael Gold-Biss, *The Discourse on Terrorism, Political Violence and the Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism, 1981-1986* (New York: Peter Lang, 1994): 163

38   Edward Said, *The World, The text, and the Critic* (London-Boston: Faber and Faber, 1983-1984): 244

39   Michel Foucault, '*Preface to* the History of Sexuality, *Volume II*', in Paul Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon, 1984): 338

An important aspect of governmentality is related to the notion of biopolitics. As a historian, Foucault is interested in developing what he calls "effective history", as opposed to theological or rationalistic historical traditions interested in teleological or natural processes.[40] One of the characteristics of effective history is that it focuses in things nearest to it, such as "the body, the nervous system, nutrition, digestion, and energies".[41] Following this perspective, the historian discovers a transformation of the power of the sovereign in the West. Traditionally, the sovereign's right of life was manifested through the exercise of his right to kill or by refraining from killing, but eventually it came to be complemented by its counterpart: the power that exerts a positive influence on life and administers, optimizes and multiplies it, subjecting it to controls and regulations.[42]

Foucault identifies the seventeenth century as the starting point of this power over life in two basic forms. The first one is discipline – the optimization of the capabilities of the human body, the increase of its usefulness and docility and its integration as parts of economic systems – while the second, developed somewhat later, focuses

> on the species body, the body imbued with the mechanisms of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity, with all the conditions that can cause these to vary. Their suspension was effected through an entire series of interventions and regulatory controls: a bio-politics of the population.[43]

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[40]   Michel Foucault, 'Nietzche, Genealogy, History', in Paul Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon, 1984): 88
[41]   Michel Foucault, 'Nietzche, Genealogy, History': 89
[42]   Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990): 135, 136
[43]   Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I*: 139

Bio-power was necessary for the development of capitalism. While the development of the instruments of the state, the institutions of power, ensured the maintenance of production relations, discipline (anatomo-politics) and bio-politics as techniques of power to be found at every level of society and used in every institutional context, also operated in economic processes and their development. [44] As such, governmentality, discipline and biopolitics have been embedded in liberalism, which for Foucault is not of interest as a theory or an ideology, but as a practice, a method of rationalizing the exercise of government and a rationalization that obeys "the internal rule of maximum economy". [45] Indeed, biopolitics employs specifically liberal methods of governance by also operating through the self-governing capabilities of individuals, spaces and categories. It emphasizes indirect forms of rule through state agencies that govern 'at a distance' through various regulatory protocols. [46]

2. Power, truth, knowledge and discourse

Foucault assumes that "power produces knowledge" and they directly imply each other. [47] Edward Said deems it Foucault's greatest intellectual contribution: the understanding of how the exercise of control in a society and its history disguises, rarefies and wraps itself systematically in a language of truth, discipline, rationality and knowledge. This language, in its naturalness, authority, professionalism and assertiveness is what Foucault has called *discourse.* "The power of discourse is that it is at once the object of struggle and the tool by which the object is conducted… The goal of discourse is to maintain

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[44]   Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I*: 140, 141. The notion of biopolitics will be examined in more detail in chapter 5.

[45]   Michel Foucault, 'The Birth of Biopolitics', in Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (eds.), *The Essential Foucault, Selections from The Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984*, (New York-London: The New Press, 1994, 2003): 202

[46]   Colleen Bell, 'Surveillance Strategies and Populations at Risk: Biopolitical Governance in Canada's National Security Policy', *Security Dialogue*, 37-2 (2006): 151

[47]   Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*: 27; Michael Gold-Biss, *The Discourse on Terrorism*: 17

itself and, more important, to manufacture its material continually".[48] Consider the example of prisons mentioned above, where the discourse has a material consequence in criminality.

Foucault is interested in solving this problem:

> …what rules of right are implemented by the relations of power in the production of discourses of truth? Or alternatively, what type of power is susceptible of producing discourses of truth that in a society such as ours are endowed with such potent effects? What I mean is this: in a society such as ours, but basically in any society, there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterise and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse. There can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operates through and on the basis of this association. We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth.[49]

What allows power to be accepted is the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us a force that denies, but that it traverses and produces things: pleasures, knowledge and discourse.[50] "We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms", suggests Foucault; it is not that power 'excludes', 'represses', 'censors', 'abstracts', 'masks' or 'conceals'. Rather, for him power "produces

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48   Edward Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic*: 216

49   Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*: 93

50   Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*: 119

reality… domains of objects and rituals of truth".[51] The point is illustrated in Foucault's examination of the history of sexuality, where he purposefully searches for instances of discursive production of power and the propagation of knowledge.[52] Western man, Foucault says, has been drawn to the task of telling everything concerning sex through analytical discourse. Contrary to what is commonly thought of the Victorian age, the boundaries of what one could say about sex were enlarged, and so the deployment of discourse cannot be adequately explained merely by prohibition. "A censorship of sex?" Foucault wonders; "There was installed rather an apparatus for producing an ever greater quantity of discourse about sex, capable of functioning and taking effect in its very economy".[53] Rather than a concern to hide sex, the last three centuries have been characterised by a variety of devices invented to speak about it. This was an "incitement to discourse", Foucault says.[54] We can already make a parallel with the current discourse on terrorism as an amplifier of all things terrorist.

The material conditions of possibility of the production of truth through discourse are the multiple institutional supports and various social structures and practices underlying the production of truth.[55] Said also emphasizes the importance of re-relating discourse to a greater network of power-relations when he notes that Foucault's method is done "by making it assume its affiliations with institutions,

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51   Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*: 194. Furthermore, while Foucault underlines 'production' as opposed to exclusion and repression, I believe it is more accurate to say that both processes imply each other. Power produces a discourse, a selective discourse which excludes whatever lies outside of it. Taking once again the example of the prison system, if the discourse that surrounds it is able to 'produce' criminals, it is in part as a consequence of ignoring the contradictions of the law enforcement apparatus. In the same way, today's war on terrorism 'produces' threats and fears while ignoring its contradictions.

52   Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I*: 12
53   Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I*: 23
54   Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I*: 34
55   Derek Hook, 'Discourse, Knowledge, Materiality, History: Foucault and Discourse Analysis', *Theory & Psychology*, 11-4 (2001): 526

agencies, classes, academies, corporations, groups, ideologically defined parties and professions."[56]
Social groups and organisations shape a society through – and are shaped by – its

> régime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and
> makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and
> false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures
> accorded value in the acquisition of truth; and the status of those who are charged with saying
> what counts as true.[57]

This generated social 'truth' is not to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production and circulation of statements. This 'truth' is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend the 'régime' of truth.[58]

The idea of the "production of truth" requires an important clarification here: when Foucault speaks of truth he does not mean "'the ensemble of truths which are to be discovered and accepted', but rather 'the ensemble of rules according to which the true and the false are separated and specific effects of power attached to the true',…"[59] Foucault is not discussing an essential or objective reality, but rather the generation of social and discursive 'objects' which we take to be real in accordance to the rules of our specific society.[60]

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56   Derek Hook, 'Discourse, Knowledge, Materiality, History': 531, 532

57   Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*: 131

58   Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*: 133

59   Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*: 132

60   Still, the idea that 'truth' is something that is produced rather than discovered poses a number of problems which

It is also in this light that we must read that "all knowledge rests upon injustice (that there is no right, not even in the act of knowing, to truth or a foundation for truth) and that the instinct for knowledge is malicious (something murderous, opposed to the happiness of mankind)".[61] Clearly the 'knowledge' referred to here is not the 'acquisition of objective truth', but rather a domination of the 'truth' which is an "ensemble of rules" so intrinsically bonded to power.

To understand what the 'truth' means for Foucault, consider that in following his views language is the means through which the world is "knowable". The search for this "truth" becomes conditional not upon the "facts", but rather the constitution of a "historical a priori". Foucault understands knowledge constituted at various times by different, constantly changing "conditions of possibility".[62]

Some commentators have read this particular use of the terms 'truth', 'knowledge' and 'language' as an epistemological and ontological position that rejects the existence of a positive, objective reality and accepts the existence of a reality that is socially constructed, where language plays a determinant role.[63] Contrary to this interpretation, Foucault's position does not seem to imply a 'relativity of the truth' as is usually understood, given the stability and security of historical circumstances. Derek Hook explains:

> What is being called for is not some naïve debunking of the 'truthful' for its own sake. Indeed, to realize that truth is a function of discourse is to realize that the conditions of truth are

are discussed in chapter 3.

61   Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice; Selected Essays and Interviews*: 162-163, in Michael Gold-Biss, *The Discourse on Terrorism*: 48

62   Michael Gold-Biss, *The Discourse on Terrorism*: 46

63   Michael Gold-Biss, *The Discourse on Terrorism*: 42

precisely rather than *relatively* contingent on current forms of discourse. It is in this way ludicrous to read Foucault as suggesting that truth is 'relative', in the open sense of the term, where all possible truth-conditions are equal, depending merely on context or interpretative perspective. Foucault views truth-conditions as extremely stable and secure, as situated in a highly specific and idiosyncratic matrix of historical and socio-political circumstances, which give rise to, and are part of, the order of discourse.[64]

More to the point is Michael Gold-Biss' observation that the physical constitution of objects is not denied by Foucault; rather, his contention is that 'facts' only become so when they are located in thought and practice. "Intentionality is uniquely human and integral to knowledge".[65]

2.1 *Discourse in science*

The insistence on making reference to historical and socio-political circumstances that create the conditions of possibility for discourse would suggest a certain interest in truth as traditionally understood; the truth of the positivist historian and the social scientist. However, what needs to be done, Foucault says

> is to dispense with 'things'… To substitute for the enigmatic treasure of 'things' anterior to discourse, the regular formation of objects that emerge only in discourse. To define these *objects* without reference to the ground, the foundation of things, but by relating them to the body of rules that enable them to form as objects of a discourse and thus constitute the

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64   Derek Hook, 'Discourse, Knowledge, Materiality, History': 525

65   Michael Gold-Biss, *The Discourse on Terrorism*: 45

conditions of their historical appearance.[66]

Thus, if history, politics or society are of any help in understanding discourse, Foucault's emphasis is on the discovery of the rules of its formation and not on 'things', facts or events that are generally considered as a given. This is why to engage critically with discourse one does not need interpretative approaches; rather, Foucault's method is to map discourse: "to trace its outline and its relations of force across a variety of discursive forms and objects".[67] But how to understand the assertion that things and objects emerge only in discourse? The 'things' discussed above are not simple objects, but rather those that constitute the object of a discourse, such as madness or terrorism, and which "does not pre-exist itself". It exists under the positive conditions of a complex group of relations "established between institutions, economic and social processes, behavioural patterns, systems of norms, techniques, types of classification, modes of characterization".[68] In other words, constructed objects of power relations. As Gold-Biss explains, hidden behind the appearance of objectivity and impartiality for which positivist science is known some degree of voluntarism can be found.[69]

The claim, then, is that through discourse and its related practices power produces truth and knowledge, just as power is itself extended by the success of its truth and knowledge claims. Naturally, Foucault is offering an alternative understanding of 'truth' and 'knowledge' from that of classical positivism. However, the proposal is not that any given statement is as valid as any other, nor that 'things', facts and events do not exist in the world. Instead, the suggestion is that it is not possible to speak of the world without assumptions that are taken as (and have the effect of) truth by conditioning our interpretation of

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66   Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*: 47, 48

67   Derek Hook, 'Discourse, Knowledge, Materiality, History': 541

68   Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*: 45

69   Michael Gold-Biss, *The Discourse on Terrorism*: 44

reality. Succinctly put, "what is denied is not that... objects exist externally to thought, but the rather different assertion that they could constitute themselves as objects outside of any discursive condition of emergence."[70] Indeed, a common misunderstanding regarding the nature of discourse is "that the construction of every object as an object of discourse involves dispensing with the realist claim concerning the existence of a world external of thought... For example, a stone can be discursively constructed as a projectile or as an object of aesthetic contemplation, but it is still the same physical object."[71]

When following Foucault's examination of discourse we must bear in mind that what is analysed is not simply that which is thought or said, but all the conditioning rules and categories that are assumed as essential parts of discourse.[72] Discursive practices determined by rules and categories have the effect of making it almost impossible to think outside of them; "to be outside of them is, by definition, to be mad, to be beyond comprehension and therefore reason".[73] Thus, discourse is that which constrains and enables writing, speaking and thinking.[74]

To Foucault's credit, it is true that the act of interpretation occurs sooner than we expect and frequently without our awareness. By not realizing our discursive assumptions we tend to confuse prediscursive

70   Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: 1985): 206, quoted in David Campbell, *Writing Security, United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998): 157

71   Jacob Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe and Zizek* (UK: Blackwell, 1999): 94; Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, 'Post-Marxism without Apologies', *New Left Review*, 1-166 (November-December 1987): 82

72   Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972-1977*, Colin Gordon, ed., (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 93

73   R. Young as paraphrased by Derek Hook, 'Discourse, Knowledge, Materiality, History': 522

74   Derek Hook, 'Discourse, Knowledge, Materiality, History': 523

events with their interpretation (their constitution as objects with sense and place within the discourse). Thus, it may be impossible to recognize events without objectifying them and establishing their meaning as part of a discourse. The act of recognition of an event as meaningful may well be one and the same with the act of discursive integration. Let us take Foucault's postulate that the deepest truth that "the genealogist has to reveal 'is the secret that [things] have no essence… or that their essence was fabricated in a piecemeal fashion from alien forms'". If interpretation is an unending task, he says, it is because there is nothing primary to interpret because, "when all is said and done, underneath it all everything is already interpretation". [75]

However, I would like to propose that what is at stake here is not the *possibility* of positive knowledge, but rather *its limits*. If discourse is unavoidable, then I believe that the most honest approach for scientists would require recognizing the discursive condition that has revealed to us a universe of objects, in the hope of gradually and constantly adjusting and expanding our interpretation of reality to have it simultaneously explain as many dissimilar events and objects as possible. It may be impossible to escape speaking from within a discourse; even the recognition of specific events or phenomena is not exempt from a degree of interpretation, and thus not truly neutral as is often pretended. The reason is that when recognizing or reporting data we have no option but to engage in an operation of selectivity: we prefer a certain piece of information above another. The choice is greatly determined by our assumptions and interests. This is a common situation in the profession of journalism: editors and reporters decide on a daily basis what is important and in what hierarchy it should be organised and presented. Even if they keep their reports as free from opinion as possible, the choice of events reported contributes to the construction of, and is determined by, a discourse. For this reason, the present

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75   Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*: 45

analysis accepts that selectivity is at work in any discourse, including that of honest science. But that does not mean that science is invalid or useless, nor that absolute relativism prevails and all discourses are equal.

Rather than explicitly considering the limited but real and positive possibilities of the advancement of science, Foucault's contention is that far from being aware of their limitations and assumptions, discourses tend to present themselves as solid science, unquestionable truth and knowledge, for they are intimately linked to power, discipline and control. Foucault's point on science and discourses of truth is as follows:

> When viewed from the level of a proposition, on the inside of a discourse, the division between true and false is neither arbitrary nor modifiable nor institutional nor violent. But when we view things on a different scale, when we ask the question of what this will to truth has been and constantly is, across our discourses, this will to truth which has crossed so many centuries of our history; what is, in its very general form, the type of division which governs our will to know (*notre volonte de savoir*), then what we see taking shape is perhaps something like a system of exclusion, a historical, modifiable, and institutionally constraining system.[76]

While I accept Foucault's criticism towards the lack of self-criticism of the practice of science and other discourses of truth, as well as their institutional exclusion of alternatives, I propose that there is still a possibility of speaking about a level of objective truth and facts. Objectivity does not mean absolute certainty nor fixed and ultimate explanations of reality; in a general sense it is indeed possible

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76   Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse', in R. Young (ed.), *Untying the text: A Post-Structuralist Reader* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1981): 54

to know aspects of reality as long as we are aware of what remains unknown and uncertain. More specifically to the purposes of this thesis, and as I will argue in more detail in chapter 3, it is possible and indeed relevant to maintain a sense of objectivity of basic facts and events for the purpose of discourse analysis.

When discussing the discourse of biology, for example, Foucault observes that Mendel, who was first rejected by the scientific community, but was later proven right, "spoke the truth, but he was not 'within the true' of the biological discourse of his time… Mendel was a true monster, which meant that science could not speak of him".[77] He was a monster because he was not speaking from within the historical 'truth', yet it will be hard to disagree with his empirical findings, i.e. the truth in the common sense of the word.

Foucault does accept the possibility of speaking "the truth in the space of a wild exteriority, but one is 'in the true' only by obeying the rules of a discursive 'policing' which one has to reactivate in each of one's discourses."[78] Although Foucault does not elaborate much, his is an interesting remark, not only because of the opportunities it opens for recovering a degree of basic objectivity, but also because the "wild exteriority" may be useful for discourse analysis: "we must also give our attention to those that are criticized, discussed, and judged, as well as those that are rejected or excluded".[79]

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77   Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse': 61

78   Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse': 61

79   Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*: 57. See chapter 5 for an exploration of alternative discourses and the 'wild exteriority' as tools of discourse analysis.

2.2 *Discourse in politics*

Leaving the possibilities for science apart, Foucault's observation applies accurately to the central discursive object of analysis of this thesis: terrorism. While terrorists and terrorist acts are often treated as independent objects and events to be simply empirically known and theoretically understood, terrorism "is a word with intrinsically negative connotations that is generally applied to one's enemies and opponents, or to those with whom one disagrees and would otherwise prefer to ignore… Use of the term implies moral judgement".[80] That is why, to a considerable extent, it has been a term of propaganda, and not description.[81] Further proof that we are dealing with interpretations is the fact that there are over a 100 different scholarly definitions of the term, some which exclude or contradict each other.[82] The word was originally used by Edmund Burke in 1790 in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* to refer to the revolutionary French democratic movements.[83] The irony of the term being created to condemn an ideology that is today considered as its opposite should be enough to prevent us from ascribing a pre-discursive essence to it. Thus, there is no *terrorism* as such; only specific violent events from which we construct, perhaps inevitably, different interpretations which condition and are conditioned by our moral postures and intellectual assumptions, with implications for the struggle of power. However, the tendency in politics is to speak of terrorism as a self-evident and uncontroversial reality.

We find a clue of the construction of the object terrorism in its intrinsic negative value. Value laden

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80   Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, (London: Victor Gollancz): 31

81   Noam Chomsky, *Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel, and the Palestinians*, (London: Pluto Press, 1999): 101

82   Alex P. Schmid, Albert J. Jongman, et al, *Political Terrorism*, (Amsterdam: SWIDOC, 1984)

83   Annamarie Oliverio, *The State of Terror*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998): 28

objects, so common in politics, fall within the same category: 'extremism', 'freedom' or 'democracy' are examples of objects without essence, for they are already interpretation. In the political realm, defined by the struggle of power, even words and concepts with a seemingly neutral definition take a positive or negative value when considered within its discursive context and under the light of the implied ideas. The notions of the 'state' or a 'nation', for instance, may be neutral in abstraction, but have always a value capable of provoking strong emotions when they appear in the context of political struggle. Furthermore, any given nation or state may be defined as an 'imagined community' which sustains its identity by virtue of its opposition to 'otherness'[84], a dichotomy which once again implies a moral stance.

The relation between discourse and power was most concisely and clearly discussed in 'The Order of Discourse', where the hypothesis is "that in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality".[85] Discourse is so overwhelming that it resembles a live creature or a natural force that must be tamed through certain procedures. Discourse in this passage means what is written and spoken, where writing or speaking are ways of "disguising the awesome materiality of so tightly controlled and managed a production" of 'truth'.[86]

Once the importance of discourse is realized, social domination results from the successful struggles for power in which the terms of political discourse of one of many contending sets of ideas come to

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84   According to David Campbell, the US is the imagined community par excellence. Central to his argument is the notion that American identity has been sustained by the construction of otherness. David Campbell, *Writing Security*, 251

85   Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse': 52

86   Edward Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic*: 47

eclipse alternative sets of ideas.[87] Foucault declares that "discourse should be viewed as neither exclusively effect nor instrument of power: 'discourse is not simply that which translates struggles or systems of domination, but is the thing for which and by which there is struggle'."[88] Considering his emphasis on materiality, we must interpret the latter idea as a consequence of an understanding of discourse in a broader sense than language; we ought to consider the idea that discourse may have quite concrete and material manifestations, for what would be the benefit of fighting for a discourse made only of words and abstractions without any solid effects? Perhaps that is exactly what Foucault meant when he proposed a guiding principle of exteriority (from the text), and to "throw off the sovereignty of the signifier". [89]

Discipline and Punish studies interesting historical examples illustrating the pressure of discourse on the material life of human beings. When the techniques of punishment shifted from public demonstrations to other methods sustained by new ideologies, for example, the discourse of the *Idéologues* "provided… a sort of general recipe for the exercise of power over men: the 'mind' as a surface of inscription for power, with semiology as its tool; the submission of bodies through the control of ideas" which proved more effective than the rituals of torture and execution. The thought of the Ideologues was not only a theory of society; it developed as a subtle technology of efficiency and economy, in opposition to the previous sumptuous expenditure of the power of the sovereign.[90]

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87   Michael Gold-Biss, *The Discourse on Terrorism*: 18

88   Derek Hook, 'Discourse, Knowledge, Materiality, History': 539

89   Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse': 65-67. However, this does not mean that Foucault identified practices with text. See chapter 4 for a further explanation.

90   Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*:102

2.3 *Discourse as dispersion*

Rather than a unified and coherent ensemble of texts and rules, Foucault characterizes discourse for its dispersion. As a consequence he is reluctant to discuss discourse in terms of ideology or science:

> Whenever one can describe, between a number of statements, such a system of dispersion, whenever, between objects, types of statements, concepts, or thematic choices, one can define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functionings, transformations), we will say, for the sake of convenience, that we are dealing with a discursive formation – thus avoiding words that are already overladen with conditions and consequences, and in any case inadequate to the task of designating such a dispersion, such as 'science', 'ideology', 'theory', or 'domain of subjectivity'. The conditions to which the elements of this division (objects, mode of statements, concepts, thematic choices) are subjected we shall call the *rules of formation*. The rules of formation are conditions of existence (but also of coexistence, maintenance, modification, and disappearance) in a given discursive division.[91]

If a system of dispersion is not a monolithic unit, but rather an expanding and flexible system, contradictions and inconsistencies arise naturally. Indeed, the fundamental contradiction is revealed by the analysis as the "organizing principle" of discourse: the bringing into play of incompatible postulates, irreconcilable influences, the economic and political conflict within a society. It is not an appearance of accident, but "the very law of its existence" that is the foundation and model of all minor contradictions; and it is on its basis that discourse emerges. "Discourse is the path from one

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91   Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*: 38

contradiction to another". For Foucault's "archaeological" analysis, contradictions are neither appearances to be overcome, nor secret principles to be uncovered, but objects to be described for themselves, "without any attempt being made to discover from what point of view they can be dissipated, or at what level they can be radicalized and effects become causes". Foucault's archaeology "does not discover a point of conciliation" in contradictions, neither does it "transfer it to a more fundamental level".[92] Foucault appears concerned that not giving contradictions their proper recognition will permit attempts to salvage the discourse, or the assumption of an idealized underlying reason or truth.

2.4 *Principles of exclusion*

The rules of formation mentioned above condition objects; types of authority; concepts and themes (theoretical strategies); and sets of rules that claim to provide standards of validity for knowledge. For example, the rules of formation with respect to objects are the institutional sites (or the "surface of emergence") where they appear; the major 'authorities of delimitation' in these sites, such as professionals (the identity of the qualified speakers); and the modes of interrogation. The rules of formation can most usefully be thought of as ways in which the production and functioning of discursive formations come about.[93]

One discursive formation may be replaced by another, which according to Foucault is to say that a general transformation of relations has occurred, but that does not necessarily alter all the elements; it

92   Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*: 150-152

93   Danica Dupont, and Frank Pearce, 'Foucault contra Foucault: Rereading the 'Governmentality' papers', *Theoretical Criminology*, 5-2 (2001)': 145, 146

is to say that statements are governed by new rules of formation, it is not to say that all objects or concepts, all enunciations or all theoretical choices disappear. Under such consideration, we may be able to explore if a discursive formation performing the political function of rendering an enemy, such as the discourse on communism during the Cold War in the US, has been replaced by another one running in a parallel direction, i.e. the current discourse on terrorism.[94]

Any continuity in political discourse cannot be read as simply an immanent unfolding, or the increasing sophistication of the discourse. Rather it will be an effect of the available repertoire from it of elements which happen to work with dominant aspects of the extra-discursive relations.[95] If, as suspected, the discourse on terrorism represents a sort of continuity of the discourse on communism, it was not a natural, linear or inevitable consequence; instead, it was a product of the contemporary power relations that took advantage of some of the useful elements available from a previous discourse. How this took place and what is the resulting discourse are subjects to be explored in the two chapters that follow.

If we wish to follow Foucault's principles of discourse analysis we must bear in mind with R. Young that what is analysed is not simply that which is thought or said, but all the rules and categories that were assumed as essential parts of discourse. Discursive practices have the effect to make it almost impossible to think outside of them; "to be outside of them is, by definition, to be mad, to be beyond comprehension and therefore reason".[96] Discourse is that which constrains and enables writing, speaking and thinking.[97]

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94   I explore the themes of the discourse on terrorism and their possible relationship to previous discursive formations in chapter 3.

95   Dupont, Danica, and Pearce, Frank, 'Foucault contra Foucault': 147

96   R. Young as paraphrased by Derek Hook, 'Discourse, Knowledge, Materiality, History': 522

97   Derek Hook, 'Discourse, Knowledge, Materiality': 523

2.4.1 *External principles of exclusion*

The first principle of exclusion in discourse, and perhaps the most obvious as well, is *prohibition*. We all know, Foucault says, that we do not have the right to say everything and that we cannot speak of just anything in any circumstances whatever. Take, for example, sexuality and politics. It does not matter that their discourse appears to be of little account, because the prohibitions that surround them very soon reveal their link with desire and power.[98] Although Foucault prioritized the positive and productive aspect of discourse, here we see that he also recognized its negative capability.

The second principle of exclusion is the *opposition between reason and madness*. Since the Middle Ages, "the madman has been the one whose discourse cannot have the same currency as others. His word may be considered null and void, having neither truth nor importance". However, "strange powers may be attributed to the madman's speech: the power of uttering a hidden truth, of telling the future, of seeing in all naivety what the other's wisdom cannot perceive."[99]

For the understanding of our present day society and subject we should expand the concept of 'madness' to include everything that is disqualified for being in radical opposition to the dominant discourse; we should think of madness in a figurative sense, and recognize exchangeable terms such as 'fringe', 'unreasonable', 'fanatic' or simply 'ignorant'. In contrast with the Middle Ages, nowadays few people attribute "strange powers" to those speaking from the far exteriority of the discourse, yet they may still attract a limited number of listeners.

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98   Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse': 52, 53

99   Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse': 53

The third system of exclusion is the *opposition between true and false*. When things are seen from a grand scale, above the level of propositions, the "will to know" becomes an institutionally constraining system. Like the other systems of exclusion, the will to truth rests on an institutional support: pedagogy, the system of books, publishing, libraries, learned societies and laboratories. It also tends to exert "a sort of pressure and something like a power constraint" on other discourses. For example: the penal system sought its justification in a theory of justice, and in sociological, psychological and medical knowledge.[100]

2.4.2 *Internal principles of exclusion*

The aforementioned first three systems of exclusion are external, but there are also procedures which are internal to the discourse. The first one of these is the *commentary*. It refers to those narratives which are recounted and repeated; sets of discourses which are recited in well defined circumstances; "things said once and preserved because it is suspected that behind them there is a secret or a treasure".[101]

Derek Hook explains that in this point Foucault is speaking of discourses based upon the major foundational narratives of a society, such as religious, juridical or scientific texts, and the interchange between these primary and secondary cultural texts, i.e. commentaries. One implication is that we over-play the importance of originality and freedom in everyday discourse when in fact much of what is spoken is really the product of repetition and recirculation.[102] These discourses "ever and above their

100   Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse': 54, 55

101   Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse': 56

102   Derek Hook, 'Discourse, Knowledge, Materiality, History': 526

formulation, are said indefinitely, remain said, and are to be said again".[103] Again, the US discourse on terrorism may be read as a commentary of earlier discourses on security and threats; an idea that is explored in more detail in chapter 3.

The hierarchy between primary and secondary allows the endless construction of new discourses. The commentary's role "is to say at least what was silently articulated 'beyond', in the text".[104]

Another internal principle of "rarefaction" of discourse is the *author*. An author is not to be understood in a simple and limited sense of the speaking individual who pronounced or wrote a text, but in the sense of a principle of grouping of discourses, which originates and unites their meanings and focuses their coherence. This principle limits the chance-element in discourse by playing "an identity which has the form of individuality and the self". In the Middle Ages the author was considered an index of truthfulness.[105] So it is today, though perhaps on a subtler level, cloaked by virtue of qualifications and of positions of authority considered as hard earned and deserved. But since it is a principle and not necessarily an individual, the power of the author may be shared by groups of people, institutions or advocates of an ideology.

For the veracity of certain statements (those that we would not be willing to accept at first sight), the principle of the author is a crucial grounding point. The author is asked to authentify the hidden meanings underlying the texts carrying his name. Foucault suggests that instead of asking about what is revealed about authors in their texts, we ask about "*what subject-positions are made possible within*

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103   Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse': 57

104   Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse': 57, 58

105   Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse': 58, 59

such texts".[106]

Who is speaking and who is qualified to do so? Foucault explains: we must describe the institutional sites from which a speaker (an expert, a politician or a religious leader) makes his discourse; for example, the hospital, the laboratory or the library. The positions of the subject are also defined by the situation that it is possible for him to occupy in relation to the various domains or groups of objects. If, in clinical discourse, the 'doctor' as *author* is the sovereign, questioner and observer, "it is because a whole group of relations is involved".[107] Indeed, once we become aware of the position of power of an author, we cannot avoid noticing the web of power relations within which she – whether as a unifying principle or an actual individual – occupies her privileged position.

The notion of dispersion, already mentioned above, applies not only to the discursive formation *per se*, but to the speaking subject as well. In Foucault's proposed analysis, instead of referring to the unifying and synthetic functions of a subject, we should refer to the various enunciative modalities, statuses, sites and positions that he can occupy that manifest his dispersion. The planes from which he speaks are in discontinuity, and if these planes are linked by a system of relations, this system is not established by the activity of an unchangeable consciousness, but by the specificity of a discursive practice.[108] It is by virtue of these discontinuities that a political leader may appear at the same time as a common man under the rule of law like any other and as the origin of law like no other; in some instances as an average member of society ("one of us"), and in others as an extraordinary being, unique in his kind.

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106   Derek Hook, 'Discourse, Knowledge, Materiality, History': 526, 527
107   Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*: 50-53
108   Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*: 54, 55

Disciplines are also a principle of limitation. Here we are not talking about the disciplinary measures imposed on society discussed above. In this context,

> A discipline is defined by a domain of objects, a set of methods, a corpus of propositions considered to be true, a play of rules and definitions, of techniques and instruments: all this constitutes a sort of anonymous system at the disposal of anyone who wants to or is able to use it, without their meaning or validity being linked to the one who happened to be their inventor.[109]

Botany and medicine are examples of disciplines. That they have methods and techniques does not in any way guarantee the infallibility of their 'truths'. On the contrary, disciplines are made up of errors as well as truths, errors which have "positive functions, a historical efficacity, and a role that is often indissociable from that of the truths". In order to be a discipline, a proposition has to be able to be inscribed on a certain type of theory.[110] A valid disciplinary statement is contingent upon the appropriate domain of objects, theories, methods, propositions, rules, definitions, techniques and instruments. In this sense, statements made from within a discipline need to fulfil certain conditions more complex than those of simple truth. The risk that the discipline takes is that truthful statements may be heard beyond its domain, "in the spaces of a wild exteriority".[111]

While Foucault was discussing mostly scientific disciplines, I would like to propose that these limiting

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109   Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse': 59

110   Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse': 60

111   Edward Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic*: 150

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principles apply also to the field of politics; even if the rules of validity seem to be somehow different, to the point that in some cases the need of fulfilment of conditions may become more relaxed than those required for scientific disciplines. A point in case is the politician who contradicts his own statements within a timeframe of a couple of months; yet his authority as the embodiment of the principle of the *author* remains untouched as a consequence of a discourse of democracy in democratic societies (i.e. the belief that citizens have effectively, willing and consciously invested the politician with power), or as a consequence of tradition or force in other forms of governments. The principle of *discipline* is also at work throughout the methods, techniques and instruments of the rationale and 'art' of government, including the interpretation of law and its enforcement, as well as the administrations of the economy and institutions and organs of the state; a 'science' about which common citizens are assumed to be uninformed.

In relation to commentary and discipline, Foucault argues "that everything stated in a field like literary discourse or medical discourse is produced only with the most selective method, with little regard for individual genius." The chances that individual authors can make individual statements are unlikely. Over every opportunity for saying something stands the regularizing collectivity that Foucault has called a discourse.[112]

Since discourse constitutes such a limitation over what may be said or not, discourse analysis should busy itself not only with the search for "a plenitude of meaning, but also with a search for the scarcity of meaning, with what *cannot* be said, with what is impossible or unreasonable within certain discursive locations." What we are seeing here is the possibility of disrupting and destabilizing the

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112   Edward Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic*: 150, 186

boundaries of the discursive powers of the discipline "for strategic purposes".[113] I reflect in more detail about what lies outside the discourse in chapter 5.

2.4.3 *Principles of rarefaction of speaking subjects*

Following Foucault's classification, a third group of procedures which permit the control of discourses refers to the speaking subjects. Generally speaking, no one may enter the order of discourse if he does not satisfy certain requirements or if he is not qualified to do so. And if he does, not all the regions of discourse are equally accessible.

The most superficial and visible of these systems of restriction is constituted by the *ritual*, which defines the qualification which must be possessed by individuals who speak and who must occupy certain positions and formulate certain types of statements, also defines the gestures, behaviour, circumstances and the whole set of signs which must accompany discourse. As a consequence it fixes the imposed efficacity of the words, their effect on those to whom they are addressed, and the limits of their constraining value.[114] Needless to say, there is no modern nor ancient society for which rituals have not been particularly significant for the political discursive practices. Always in accordance to the specific national idiosyncrasy, politicians invoke deities or values, wear military uniforms or perform rituals that will evoke empathy on the average citizen.

The system of *societies of discourse* produces and preserves discourses that circulate in a closed environment, distributing them according to strict rules, and without the holders being dispossessed by

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113   Derek Hook, 'Discourse, Knowledge, Materiality, History': 527, 528

114   Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse': 61, 62

this distribution.[115]

It is easy to picture a society of discourse in the field of science, where not only the requirements of knowledge, but also recognized qualifications and degrees conferred by prestigious institutions and the scientific argot serve the purpose of closing the discourse to the uninitiated. Once again, I believe we may find some differences with the field of politics. In the latter, the knowledge of the 'art of government' is not such an important principle as much as it is the imposed secrecy which characterizes any struggle for power. It is not only that civilians are presumed to not fully understand the motives of the state, but that reasons are offered to deny detailed explanations of government actions in the name of the 'common good' and, above all, security. The most illustrative examples are the secret and intelligence services, which are presumed to be, by their very nature, exempt of providing explanations and on occasions even of telling the truth if forced to give an explanation at all. This is perhaps one of the most unfortunate contradictions of democratic societies: the lack of transparency gives certain groups within the ruling class an incommensurable amount of power above civil society, which may open the door to corruption and abuse.

As opposed to 'societies of discourse', the *doctrine* tends to be diffused. It is by the holding in common of the same discourse ensemble that individuals define their doctrinal reciprocal allegiance. Doctrines are different from 'disciplines', which control the form and content of statements, in that "doctrinal allegiance puts in question both the statement and the speaking subject, the one by the other". Heresy and orthodoxy stem from the doctrine; not from a fanatical exaggeration of its mechanisms, but rather they belong fundamentally to them.

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115   Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse': 62, 63

Foucault recognizes that it is "very abstract to separate speech-rituals, societies of discourse, doctrinal groups and social appropriations, as I have just done. Most of the time they are linked to each other and constitute kinds of great edifices which ensure the distribution of speaking subjects into the different types of discourse and the appropriation of discourses to certain categories of subject."[116] Some of these abstract categories may even juxtapose to become one and the same in certain situations; for example, in a discourse within a convention of a political party, the doctrine may be indistinguishable from the society of discourse, i.e., only those that share the ideology would be allowed to speak in such a forum, and probably only they would be expected to receive the message in the same way and with the same degree of interest.

2.5 *Philosophical themes that reinforce means of exclusion*

Foucault believes that the following philosophical ideas underlie the systems of exclusion:

- The Heideggerian idea of the *founding subject* who directly "animates the empty forms of language with his/her aims", and that has at his or her disposal all sorts of signs, but does not need to pass "via the singular instance of discourse in order to manifest them". [117] It is through the intuition of this subject that meaning is grasped.

- The theme of *originating experience* which supposes "that at the very basis of experience

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116 Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse': 63, 64

117 Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I*, (1980): 114, quoted by Derek Hook, 'Discourse, Knowledge, Materiality, History': 528

there were prior significations, things already said, wandering around the world 'arranging it around us and opening it up from the outset to a sort of primitive recognition'". In this idealist conception the world is "occupied by 'things… already murmuring meanings which our language has only to pick up'".[118]

- The notion of *universal mediation* "indicates the presumption of an omnipresent logos elevating particularities to the status of concepts and allowing immediate consciousness to unfurl ultimately the whole rationality of the world". Discourse becomes little more than "the gleaming of a truth in the process of being born to its own gaze" and "things themselves, and events… imperceptibly turn themselves into discourse as they unfold the secrets of their own essence".[119]

It is on the basis of these three philosophical themes that discourse is reduced to a play of writing (in founding subject), a play of reading (originating experience) and a play of exchange (universal mediation). The point is that these activities never put anything at stake except signs; discourse as an event is reduced to the signifier. Therefore, "the analysis of discourse should not defer simply to a reading of textuality, to a study of powerful significations". Foucault refuses analyses "couched in terms of the symbolic field or the domain of signifying structures", and proposes as remedy "analyses in terms of the genealogy of relations of force, strategic developments, and tactics… The history which determines us has the form of a war rather than that of language: relations of power, not relations of

118   Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I*, (1980): 114, quoted by Derek Hook, 'Discourse, Knowledge, Materiality, History': 529

119   Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I*, (1980): 114, quoted by Derek Hook, 'Discourse, Knowledge, Materiality, History': 529

meaning."[120]

This does not mean that we should ignore the text and its meaning, but rather to place it within the web of power relations that forms its true context.

3. Archaeology

Foucault admits he has privileged discourses that define the 'sciences of man' as the objects of his method. But the analysis of discursive events is not limited to this field.[121] Embedded in the struggle for power by definition, politics is an obvious candidate. Understanding how it would be applied to this field requires a review of the epistemological implications of a Foucauldian approach.

Foucault's "archaeological" method is supposed to reveal how discourse overrides society and governs the production of culture. The formation of discourses and the genealogy of 'knowledge' are not to be analysed in terms of types of consciousness, perception and ideology, "but in terms of tactics and strategies of power".[122]

Because philosophical themes reinforce the limitations and exclusions by a denial of the specific reality of discourse in general, we must take the following steps: question our will to truth, restore to discourse its character as an event, and discard the sovereignty of the signifier.[123]

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120   Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I*, (1980): 114, quoted by Derek Hook, 'Discourse, Knowledge, Materiality, History': 529

121   Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*: 30

122   Edward Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic*: 186, 219

123   Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse': 65, 66

How could these three recommendations be put into practice?

Questioning the will to truth would imply replacing what are usually considered 'true' explanations with a conditional approach that can show that what counts as 'the truth' is a product of discourse and power. Instead of analyzing the will to truth, one would be on the watch for the will to power.[124] This would be a strategic distrust that supposes all interpretations and explanations above the level of simple statements as partially or completely produced by the motivation of power. It is evident that such a methodological requirement would have its best point of applicability on the political sphere.

However – and to further stress the possibilities and limits of knowledge – I propose that if we are to be completely honest in our scepticism of rationales, we should apply it to ourselves. We should avoid interpretations or explanations above the level of propositions, simple verifiable data and its logical consequences; and if we decide to engage in interpretation, we should give up any pretensions of absolute certainty (contrasting with dominant discourses that accept no doubts), and accept that the degree of probability diminishes the further we attempt to abstract from the basic facts available. In regards to the analysis of the war on terrorism carried out in this thesis I take such position: the dominant discourse will be openly approached with disbelief; while resisting the construction of grand theories above basic facts and events, and always retaining a sense of lack of absolute certainty. As argued above, this does not mean that we cannot make any contributions to science, but rather that they will be limited.

In order to decide if we are to "restore to discourse its character as an event", we must make sure we

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124   Derek Hook, 'Discourse, Knowledge, Materiality, History': 524, 525

understand what Foucault means by this: to see discourse as an event is to identify it as a set of assumptions. Perhaps the main assumption historians make is that singular events are dissolved "into an ideal continuity – as a teleological movement or a natural process".[125] To counter this assumption, Foucault proposes an "effective" history dealing with events in its most unique characteristics, those which are not controlled by regulative mechanisms but rather respond to haphazard conflicts. [126] Extending this understanding to the notion of discourse, its character as an event means that we must rid it from the assumption of progress or teleology, while recognizing it as a unique conflict free of immutable necessities.

Eventualization also "means rediscovering the connections, encounters, supports, blockages, plays of forces, strategies and so on which… count… as being self-evident, universal and necessary". According to Hook, this enables us to isolate very different and multiple origins of discourse which will reveal its functions of exclusion. He reads Foucault as a proposal to follow a polymorphism of analysis; the more we do it, the more we will be able to tie discourse to the motives and operations of power-interests. Analysis hence would proceed by a progressive form of saturation of sources of origin and realization, to an increasing polymorphism of data sources.[127]

Foucault has argued that historically discourse became invisible. If it disappeared, "it did so for political reasons, the better for it to be used to practice a more insidious form of control over its material and its subjects. Thus the very effectiveness of modern discourse is linked to its invisibility

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[125]   Michel Foucault, 'Nietzche, Genealogy, History', in Paul Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon, 1984): 88
[126]   Michel Foucault, 'Nietzche, Genealogy, History': 88
127   Derek Hook, 'Discourse, Knowledge, Materiality, History': 531

and to its rarity".[128] From this passage and others we may infer that re-establishing the character of event means, in summary, two things: to recognize its existence and consequences as opposed to assume it as self-evident, and to set it in its proper historical context of struggle for power. In the discourse analysis concerning this thesis I will follow this recommendation too.

A further observation is necessary. Foucault refers to Enlightenment as an event or set of events, but identifies Humanism as a theme or set of themes. As an event, Enlightenment includes elements of social transformation, types of political institution, forms of knowledge, projects of rationalization of knowledges and practices, as well as technological mutations. Humanism, on the other hand, is a set of themes that have reappeared on several occasions, always tied to value judgements, but varied greatly in their content, as well as in the values they have preserved.[129] By making this difference, Foucault underscores the historical uniqueness of an event. Discourse is to be understood in this way, although it may contain elements of recurrent previous themes in different forms.

Indeed, in Foucault's insistence on the contingencies of historical context as opposed to the necessity of metaphysics we find the essence of the archaeological method.

Archaeological – and not transcendental – in the sense that it will not seek to identify the universal structures of all knowledge or of all possible moral action, but will seek to treat the instances of discourse that articulate what we think, say, and do as so many historical events. And this critique will be genealogical in the sense that it will not deduce from the form of what we are what it is impossible for us to do and to know; but it will separate out, from the contingency that has made us what we are,

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[128]   Edward Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic*: 219

[129]   Michel Foucault, 'What is Enlightenment?', in Paul Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon, 1984): 43

the possibility of no longer being, doing or thinking what we are, do, or think.[130]

Similarly, we must comprehend Foucault's position in relation to the "sovereignty of the signifier". Said explains that while Derrida's theory brings criticism to bear on a signifier freed from any obligation to a transcendental signified,

> Foucault's theories move criticism from a consideration of the signifier to a description of the signifier's place, a place rarely innocent, dimensionless, or without the affirmative authority of discursive discipline. In other words, Foucault is concerned with describing the force by which the signifier occupies a place […] The value is that the signifier is historical, and that a signifier occupying a place is "an act of will with ascertainable political and intellectual consequences, and an act fulfilling a strategic desire to administer and comprehend a vast and detailed field of material.[131]

By throwing off the sovereignty of the signifier, a historical context made of power relations, together with the conditions of possibility and systems of exclusion it creates, and its material and external manifestations and contradictions, becomes as important as the message itself.

As Hook observes, we need to define discourse in a broad sense that is not limited to the analyses of texts.

> [O]ne should approach discourse less as a language, or as textuality, than as an active

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[130]   Michel Foucault, 'What is Enlightenment?': 46
131   Edward Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic*: 220

'occurring', as something that implements power and action, and that also *is* power and action. Rather than a mere vocabulary or language, a set of instruments that we animate, discourse *is* the thing that is done, 'the violence', as Foucault puts it, 'which we do to things'. In a similar vein, Said adds that the predominant goal of discourse is 'to maintain itself and, more important, to manufacture its material continually'. Many of Foucault's later works take this material level of discourse as their prime focus. Discipline and Punish (1979) is a case point, where Foucault maps, in rigorous detail, power's various and developing investments in the body.[132]

Under this light, the practices of the discourse on terrorism with which this project is concerned may be considered as part of the discourse itself. Strictly speaking, however, Foucault would have rejected the idea of identifying discourse with practice.[133]

For the specific purpose of discourse analysis, this project will also consider both language and material practices as equally important elements of discourse.

3.1 *Principles of Archaeology*

The archaeological method is implicitly supported by the following principles.

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132   Derek Hook, 'Discourse, Knowledge, Materiality, History': 532, quoting Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse': 67 and Edward Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic*: 216.

133   See chapter 4 for a more detailed discussion on this topic.

3.1.1 *Principle of reversal*:

> Where tradition sees the source of discourses, the principle of their swarming abundance and of their continuity, in those figures which seem to play a positive role, e.g., those of the author, the discipline, the will to truth, we must rather recognize the negative action of a cutting-up and a rarefaction of discourse.[134]

Here we find again the scepticism towards the alleged benefits of the will to know and its actual results. The belief in these positive figures only serves to its rarefaction, a metaphor which suggests that it becomes more difficult to identify and grasp.

3.1.2 *Principle of discontinuity*:

> The fact that there are systems of rarefaction does not mean that beneath them or beyond them there reigns a vast unlimited discourse, continuous and silent, which is quelled and repressed by them, and which we have the task of raising up by restoring the power of speech to it. We must not imagine that there is a great unsaid or a great unthought which runs throughout the world and intertwines with all its forms and all its events, and which we would have to articulate or to think at last. Discourses must be treated as discontinuous practices, which cross each other, are sometimes juxtaposed with one another, but can just as well exclude or be unaware of each other.[135]

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134   Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse': 67

135   Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse': 67

To fully understand the principle of discontinuity we must bear in mind the author's mistrust with regard to cause-effect historical explanations. Foucault suggested that linear causality and narratives of progress and continuity "are not always the most profitable methodological tools of analysis." He took great pains to distance himself from all traditional histories which portrayed the present as the outcome of a teleological evolution.[136] The same mistrust that pertains to historical events is being applied to the historical transformation of discourse and ideas.

Foucault's argument of *The Archaeology of Knowledge* is that traditional histories tend to rely on coherent and logical frames that order data while lacking a full understanding of the mechanisms taking place. In traditional history, the trajectory of the subject (humanity or consciousness) is underwritten by the notion of continuity, while the subject is the 'author and guarantor of this continuity'. "It is against these two notions that make 'historical analysis the discourse of the continuous' and 'human consciousness the original subject of all historical development' that Foucault offers up the form of analysis he designates as archaeology."[137] Similarly, what Foucault calls 'genealogy' opposes evolutionary paths. An implication of the genealogical method is that the historian should not seek origins but the contingent, slow and unsteady emergence of conditions of possibility for an event to take place.[138]

> We must be ready to receive every moment of discourse in its sudden irruption; in that punctuality in which it appears, and in that temporal dispersion that enables it to be repeated, known, forgotten, transformed, utterly erased, and hidden, far from all view, in the dust of

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136   Dupont, Danica, and Pearce, Frank, 'Foucault contra Foucault': 134

137   Dupont, Danica, and Pearce, Frank, 'Foucault contra Foucault': 139, 140

138   M. De Goede, *Virtue, Fortune and Faith: A Genealogy of Finance*, (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Newcastle University, July 2001): 61, 62

books. Discourse must not be referred to the distant presence of the origin, but treated as and when it occurs.[139]

Genealogy "must record the singularity of events outside of any monotonous finality" looking for them "in what we tend to feel is without history – in sentiments, love, conscience, instincts; it must be sensitive to their recurrence, not in order to trace the gradual curve of their evolution, but to isolate the different scenes where they engaged in different roles."[140] The pursuit of the origin is challenged because "it is an attempt to capture the exact essence of things", while "if the genealogist refuses to extend his faith in metaphysics, if he listens to history", he does not discover a timeless and essential secret, "but the secret that they have no essence or that their essence was fabricated in a piecemeal fashion from alien forms".[141] The focus on the human body is a consequence of the genealogist's search to 'descend' away from metaphysics. Its task is therefore "to expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history's destruction of the body." [142] It follows that what the genealogist finds is power at play rather than essence, as he "seeks to reestablish the various systems of subjection: not the anticipatory power of meaning, but the hazardous play of dominations."[143]

A clarifying note is pertinent here. Although archaeology and genealogy are often used interchangeably, there is a distinction of emphasis to be made. While archaeology is more concerned with discourse and structure, genealogy emphasizes historical power relations and technologies and practices of power that are focused on the body in particular.[144]

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139   Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*: 25

140   Michel Foucault, 'Nietzche, Genealogy, History': 76
141   Michel Foucault, 'Nietzche, Genealogy, History': 78
142   Michel Foucault, 'Nietzche, Genealogy, History': 82, 83
143   Michel Foucault, 'Nietzche, Genealogy, History': 84
144   Andrew W. Neal, 'Foucault in Guantánamo: Towards an Archaeology of the Exception', *Security Dialogue*, 37

Against continuity in the history of ideas, therefore, we must quit notions such as tradition, influence, development, evolution or 'spirit'. Instead of attributing them "unqualified, spontaneous value", we must admit that, "in the first instance, they concern only a population of dispersed events."

However, we must be clear that the proposal is that while the forms of continuity should remain in suspense, "they must not be rejected definitively… but the tranquillity with which they are accepted must be disturbed." [145] Indeed, discarding *all* forms of continuities would discard the logical principle of cause and effect. Foucault's suggestion is simply that we do not take continuity for granted. However, more elaborate (and usually more optimistic) ideals of continuity, implying long term, linearity and straightforwardness, such as teleology or evolution, are abandoned entirely.

It is also important to understand that challenging the idea of a continuous history does not mean that we should ignore historical context; quite the opposite. Dreyfus and Rabinow make a distinction between a 'history of the past' and a 'history of the present'. A 'history of the past' is essentially a work of the present, strongly attached to the current socio-political realm, with the purpose of understanding what happened in the past. By contrast, a 'history of the present' interrogates the present, its values, discourses and understandings with recourse to the past as a resource of destabilizing critical knowledge.[146] The first one seeks to accommodate our understanding of the past to our understanding of the present without realizing how it is actually determined by dominant contemporary ideals. The second one is aware of the need to challenge these ideals. Therefore, history is not only important to

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(2006): 38

145   Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*: 21, 22, 25

146   As explained by Derek Hook, 'Discourse, Knowledge, Materiality, History': 533, 534

situate past events in their proper context, but to liberate ourselves from the restrictions of the present. As Hook notes, without the historical dimension we will be limited to "'scratching the surface of discourse'; our results will remain loaded with contemporary values, more a product of contemporary discourse than critical analysis of it".[147] We should not forget that discourse is historically located. Discourse analysis needs to destabilize the contents of discourse by undermining their 'ahistorical' authority.[148]

The notion of discontinuity is also a reiteration of the dispersions of incompatible themes. Analyses describing them, Foucault writes, "would study forms of division… instead of reconstituting *chains of inference* (as one often does in the history of sciences or of philosophy), instead of drawing *tables of differences* (as the linguists do), it would describe *systems of dispersion*".[149] Not making inferred connections from one incompatible theme to another, but accepting them as series in dispersion.

This leads to the methodological opposition of *series versus unity*. Hook explains: Rather than assume a shared likeness, among the components of the analysis, the analyst of discourse must be prepared to search for similar functions across a variety of different forms (language, practices, material reality, institutions, subjectivity). And rather than following linear successions of development, the analyst must trace a laterality, mapping parallels of regularity.[150] Discursive events must be treated as homogeneous series, yet discontinuous in relation to each other. Foucault's conception of series warns us of the fact that discourse often works in contradictory ways.

I have interpreted Foucault's suggestion of not imagining "a great unsaid or a great unthought… which

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147   Derek Hook, 'Discourse, Knowledge, Materiality, History': 533, 534
148   Derek Hook, 'Discourse, Knowledge, Materiality, History': 533, 534
149   Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*: 37
150   Derek Hook, 'Discourse, Knowledge, Materiality, History': 534

we would have to articulate or to think at last" as a denial of the continuous. However, it may also be read as a rejection of the idea of recovering meanings excluded, marginalized or 'repressed' by discourse in order to bring us to truth. Foucault believes that a silent discourse "quelled and repressed by various practices" does not exist, and subsequently it is not our task to "raise up the restored power of speech to it".

As Hook correctly notes, this is a difficult point because it does seem that Foucault is trying to give voice to those de-legitimized sources disqualified from predominant discourse. "Whilst this may be the case", Hook explains, "it is worth bearing in mind that this kind of genealogical recovery of subjugated voices does not occur under the auspices of confronting a great untruthfulness with the force of an indisputable truth. It occurs rather under the auspices of tracing discursive formations of power and control, by assembling a strategically organized ensemble of historical knowledges that will be capable of opposition and of struggle against the coercion of presiding discourse". And so it follows that the analyst should be predominantly concerned with systematically exploiting and demonstrating the gaps, shortcomings, contradictions and discontinuities of a given discourse, as the weaknesses to be stressed.[151]

Hook's remarks aside, I believe that a strict application of Foucault's method goes too far if it dismisses the potentialities of the suppressed discourses. This is so for three reasons: First, because within these de-legitimized sources and at the level of simple propositions and facts we can indeed find objective truths which contradict the dominant discourse. Since these statements have no place within the dominant discourse, they may only be considered as part of the "unsaid", whether they are just

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151   Derek Hook, 'Discourse, Knowledge, Materiality, History': 535-536

fragmented data or they constitute the foundation of alternative discourses. Second, because the fact that we have no knowledge of grand explanations of greater truths, and the probability of ever having it may be quite small, does not imply that such a knowledge is impossible, and so it may remain as a "great unthought". Third, because alternative discourses which have been suppressed or marginalized do exist. I will explore this point in more detail in chapter 5.

3.1.3 *Principle of specificity*:

> We must not resolve discourse into a play of pre-existing significations; we must not imagine that the world turns towards us a legible face which we would have only to decipher; the world is not the accomplice to our knowledge; there is no prediscourse providence which disposes the world in our favour. We must conceive discourse as a violence which we do to things, or in any case as a practice which we impose on them; and it is in this practice that the events of discourse find the principle of their regularity.[152]

And from *The Archaeology of Knowledge*:

> We shall call discourse a group of statements in so far as they belong to the same discursive formation; it does not form a rhetorical or formal unity, endlessly repeatable, whose appearance or use in history might be indicated (and, if necessary, explained); it is made up of a limited number of statements for which a group of conditions of existence can be defined… it is, from beginning to an end, historical – a fragment of history, a unity and discontinuity in history itself,

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152   Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse': 67

posing the problem of its own limits, its divisions, its transformations, the specific modes of its temporality rather than its sudden irruption in the midst of the complicities of time… A 'discursive practice' is a body of anonymous, historical rules, always determined in the time and space that have defined a given period, and for a given social, economic, geographical or linguistic area, the conditions of operation of the enunciative formation.[153]

It is in the language and practice of doing violence to things that a specific discourse will show us its regularity and meaning, as opposed to guiding the analysis through our assumptions of what the generalities of the discourse are. Hook explains that the principle of specificity opposes over-generalizing forms of analysis that would resolve specific discursive forms into 'a play of pre-existing significations'. A 'general reading' assumes that 'the world turns towards us a legible face which we would have only to decipher'. But "it is not the case that there are inherent meanings in things, that varieties of discourse more or less closely approximate true or intrinsic meanings; by contrast, we come to know meanings and to distinguish truth-claims *precisely on the basis of discourse*." [154] Foucault himself writes: whereas the regularity of a sentence is defined by the laws of language and that of proposition by the laws of logic, the regularity of statements is defined by the discursive formation itself.[155] Thus, we should not assume that the discursive formation implies homogeneity, continuity nor coherence, since the statements' logic is determined by the discourse itself.

However, "to proclaim that 'there is no prediscursive providence' is not to subsume everything within the world into discourse". Indeed, to suggest that our knowledge of the world and the scope of things

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153   Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*: 117

154   Derek Hook, 'Discourse, Knowledge, Materiality, History': 536, 537

155   Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*: 116

that we can reasonably say is governed by certain discursive formations is clearly different to saying that there is nothing beyond the text, and that everything that happens within the world is reducible to certain textual markers.[156] This would be absurd and a logical error. And again, as commented above, this does not mean that simple objective truths at the level of the statement are impossible either.

In contrast to suggestions that discursive practices can be largely reduced to textuality, Foucault warns that we must "throw off the sovereignty of the signifier" and look further afield to identify a wider array of discursive effects. He demands that the analysis be fixed in the *physicality* of its effects and in the *materiality* of its practices.

There is a regularity that links the textual to the material. While discussing the opposition between *regularity and originality*, Foucault argues that "similar discursive acts can occur in a multitude of different ways, in various different forms that stretch from what has typically been considered 'discursive', that is, the textual, to the 'extra-discursive', the material level of discursive practices…[157] Foucault's conception of discourse is situated far more closely to knowledge, materiality and power than it is to language".[158]

3.1.4 *Principle of exteriority*:

We must not go from discourse towards its interior, hidden nucleus, towards the heart of a

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156   Derek Hook, 'Discourse, Knowledge, Materiality, History', 536, 537

157   Derek Hook, 'Discourse, Knowledge, Materiality, History': 536, 537

158   Derek Hook, 'Discourse, Knowledge, Materiality, History': 542. Although this thesis dedicates a space to language and text of the war on terrorism in chapter 3, it includes an analysis of the practices that I read as constituent elements of the discourse. The subject is further discussed in chapter 4.

thought or a signification supposed to be manifested in it; but, on the basis of discourse itself, its appearance and its regularity, go towards its external conditions of possibility, towards what gives rise to aleatory series of these events, and fixes its limits.[159]

Thus the impossibility of reducing the complexity of a discursive formation to one simple notion or statement.

Foucault's interest in textuality is to present the text without its "esoteric or hermetic elements", and to do this by assuming the affiliation of the text with institutions, offices, agencies, classes, academies, corporations, groups, guilds, ideologically defined parties and professions. Foucault's descriptions of a text or discourse attempt to resemanticise and redefine the particular interests that the text serves by the detail and subtlety of the description.[160] Foucault's priority is not that of textuality or signification, but rather that of materiality, conditions of possibility and historical circumstance and context. Hence Foucault's analysis of discourse occurs fundamentally through the extra-discursive. Looking at what can be shown to be within the text is insufficient because alternative interpretations will always be possible. The analyst of discourse needs to appeal to certain stable reference points outside of the text. One needs to reference one's analytical conclusions, wherever possible, to both the textual and the extra-textual dimensions, like those of space (geopolitics), time (history), and material forms of practice.[161] Furthermore, the material dimension "is constitutive of the statement itself: a statement must have a substance, a support, a place, and a date. And when these requisites change, it too changes

159   Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse': 67

160   Edward Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic*: 212

161   Derek Hook, 'Discourse, Knowledge, Materiality, History': 539

identity."[162]

In this chapter I have made an exegesis of Foucault's ideas on power and discourse as an introduction to his work. Given that my objective of assessing Foucault is to be carried out in the context of the analysis of the discourse of the war on terrorism and not in abstract, for the most part I have avoided arguing with the notions presented above, except for one general epistemological point: that Foucault's observations about truth, discourse and knowledge do not actually discard the possibility of positive knowledge, but rather set limits to it. This point is further developed in chapter 3.

Both the exegesis and the point about the limits of knowledge serve as a platform to carry on with the objectives of the thesis. The following chapters will show that a great number of Foucault's propositions are indeed useful. Others are only relevant to a certain extent and require the complementary observations and works of other authors, with whom I do not believe there is any logical contradiction. Only a few of Foucault's observations are in clear opposition with alternative approaches.

4. Previous approaches to the war on terrorism applying Foucauldian notions

Before we proceed, a review of previous contemporary analyses on the war on terrorism that follow Foucault is pertinent. As too great a number of thinkers have contributed to this area of analysis, the review that follows is not intended to be exhaustive. Rather, it is a representative sample meant to acknowledge the works that to a great extent sustain my own, by providing either useful insights, or by

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162   Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*: 101

holding positions that require a response, in as much as they might lack recognition of the limits of Foucault and the relevance of complementary theories. The review will also place my own contribution to the field in perspective and delineate its significance.

We will notice that a number of these authors focus on the practices of the war on terror as governmentality and biopolitics, and only occasionally seek to apply other Foucauldian notions. Indeed, what these works mostly represent is a tradition attempting to detect and explain technologies and strategies of power as manifested on every day life of liberal societies; as well as a preference for the analysis of the capillary level of power. This tradition has been partly influential for the present discussion, particularly in regards to the issues raised in chapter 4, where the discursive aspects of the practices of the war on terror are treated.

The works that follow also represent positions seeking to blend, complement or contrast Foucault with thinkers dealing with similar issues, such as Giorgio Agamben or Gilles Deleuze. Their use of different complementing authors has also been influential to my own analysis, as I apply a degree of ecclecticism throughout the thesis. Again, a dialogue between the works of Foucault and Agamben appears in chapter 4.

Michael Dillon argues that the war on terror emerged "out of a generic biopolitics of contingency in the west, and is being conducted according to its political technologies and governmental rationalities".[163] He explicitly rejects the notion that the state of emergency of this century is as described by Carl Schmitt or Giorgio Agamben. Rather, he argues that biopolitics have adopted the contingent as their

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[163]   Michael Dillon, 'Governing Terror: The State of Emergency of Biopolitical Emergence', *International Political Sociology*, 1(2007): 8

principle of formation, where life is understood by Dillon as constant nonlinear adaptation and change. In this sense, he characterizes biopolitics as encompassing lifelike systems, thus blurring the line between the organic and the inorganic.[164] In a later article co-authored with Luis Lobo-Guerrero, Dillon further explains:

> [W]e pursue the biopolitical imagination in a different direction, asking what happens to regimes of governance that take life as their referent object when what it means to be a living thing is transformed by processes of molecularization and digitalization... Our interest specifically concerns how the molecularization of life compounds the contingency, circulation and complexity that already preoccupies the biopolitical imaginary of species-being, in particular for the purposes of continually adding value to species existence. Molecularized life is not more certain life. It is differently contingent life.[165]

While their expansion from a traditional notion of biopolitics is arguable, the approach is useful to explain certain practices of the war on terror, such as those related to technology or surveillance, but falls short for an analysis of torture. Indeed, torture as a display of overwhelming power (domination) begs for Agamben's analysis on sovereignty and bare life, as I will attempt to show in chapter 5.

In contrast with the way the 'war on terror' has been widely regarded – i.e. as a return to a traditional form of imperialism in the international system by a reassertion of the sovereign power of nation-states and away from processes of globalisation – Julian Reid argues that the "integral logistical and normative roles that biopolitical forces continue to play in the organisation of power internationally

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[164] Michael Dillon, 'Governing Terror': 7, 12-15
[165] Michael Dillon and Luis Lobo-Guerrero, 'The Biopolitical Imaginary of Species-being', *Theory Culture Society*, 26-1 (2009): 15, 16

today"[166] are neglected by such accounts, which place too much emphasis on the role and agency of government, as well as the discursive shift that has occurred within US foreign policy and in the articulation of its strategy. In the case of the war on Iraq, Reid continues, the Bush administration "went to inordinate lengths to secure the support of a range of different non-governmental and humanitarian actors in advance of the actual conduct of the war." [167] It established an inter-agency group for the planning of the post-war relief and reconstruction in Iraq, and held meetings with NGOs to pre-plan the reconstruction. Financial aid was provided to enable the UN high Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and humanitarian agencies to pre-position humanitarian aid; warehouses spaces were paid for in Gulf states for humanitarian supplies; and practices of social reconstruction were integrated as fully as possible within the military operation. From these facts, Reid concludes that the war in Iraq was fought along biopolitical lines, in an important sense, and not simply by a naked expression of the sovereign power of the USA: "The invasion that took Iraq by storm in the spring of 2003 was a complex amalgam of forces combining the sovereign power of the USA with the biopower of a range of deterritorialised actors."[168] Reid solves the contradiction between sovereign and biopolitical forces by turning to Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's theorisation of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation – forces which are inseparable and in a permanent state of antagonistic tension.[169]

Claudia Aradau and Rens Van Munster seek to distance their analysis from Ulrich Beck's popular notion of the global risk society. While appearing to have been confirmed by the attacks of September 11, 2001, Beck's thesis views risk "within a macro-sociological narrative of modernity"[170] from which

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[166]   Julian Reid, 'The Biopolitics of the War on Terror: a critique of the 'return of imperialism' thesis in international relations', *Third World Quarterly*, 26-2 (2005): 240
[167]   Julian Reid, 'The Biopolitics of the War on Terror: 246
[168]   Julian Reid, 'The Biopolitics of the War on Terror: 246
[169]   Julian Reid, 'The Biopolitics of the War on Terror: 248
[170]   Claudia Aradau and Rens Van Munster, 'Governing Terrorism Through Risk: Taking Precautions, (un)Knowing the Future', *European Journal of International Relations*, 13-1 (2007): 89

they depart by arguing for an understanding of governing terrorism through a Foucauldian account of governmentality. The authors conceptualize risk as a *dispositif* for governing social problems; a "heterogeneous assemblage of discursive and material elements"[171] that enables the location of a diversity of developments, such as the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the counter-terrorist targeting of Muslim communities or the indefinite detention of suspects in the UK.[172]

Aradau and Van Munster explicitly privilege constructivism over realism while recognizing that Beck describes himself as ontologically realist and epistemologically constructivist.[173]

Covering the wider terrain of security policy by assuming Foucault's postulation of the privileging of the management of biological life, Colleen Bell examines the case of Canada's 2004 national security policy and its surveillance strategies. While she makes use of Agamben's work to clarify how biopolitics structures strategies of sovereignty – and how a biopolitical project may become thanatopolitical, i.e. politics of death, as it seeks the purification of races[174] – she does not offer it as a competing account to Foucault.[175] The connection between biopolitics and security occurs "as the business of managing affairs of the state is channelled through mechanisms of national security in the name of protecting biological life."[176] Bell also identifies the panoptic gaze identified by Foucault with the rise of the surveillance society.[177]

In a similar fashion, Louise Amoore develops the concept of biometric border in the war on terror; that

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[171]   Claudia Aradau and Rens Van Munster, 'Governing Terrorism Through Risk': 91
[172]   Claudia Aradau and Rens Van Munster, 'Governing Terrorism Through Risk': 91
[173]   Claudia Aradau and Rens Van Munster, 'Governing Terrorism Through Risk': 92, 96
[174]   Colleen Bell, 'Surveillance Strategies and Populations at Risk: Biopolitical Governance in Canada's National Security Policy', *Security Dialogue*, 37-2 (2006): 162
[175]   Colleen Bell, 'Surveillance Strategies and Populations at Risk': 149, 150
[176]   Colleen Bell, 'Surveillance Strategies and Populations at Risk': 151
[177]   Colleen Bell, 'Surveillance Strategies and Populations at Risk': 156

is, the use of digital technologies, data integration and managerial expertise in border control, together with the exercise of biopower.[178] Biometric borders extend the governing of mobility regulating multiple aspects of daily life. According to Amoore, "the biometric border is the portable border par excellence, carried by mobile bodies at the very same time as it is deployed to divide bodies at international boundaries, airports, railway stations, on subways or city streets, in the office or the neighbourhood." [179] Following Foucault, Amoore reflects on the US VISIT program, in which the subject becomes objectivised through dividing practices which break it up into risk factors, both within herself ('student', 'muslim', 'woman') and in relation to others ('alien', 'immigrant', 'illegal').[180]

Also reflecting on contemporary management of borders, including the case of the US government's campaign against global terrorism, William Walters complements a Foucauldian political sociology committed to understanding power in terms of its multiple tactics and functionings, with Deleuze's idea of the control society. Walters is correct in identifying the latter within the same tradition as the former. One of Walters' merits is that he is ready to expand Foucault's understanding of disciplinary societies into a one in which power has become more fluid, less centred and operating in fluctuating networks of production and consumption.[181]

One of the key transformations of the control society is a shift in the *spatiality of power*: "from forms of governance which privilege particular institutional sites of confinement to open networks of power which operate through variable combinations and productions of desire, lifestyle, anxiety and fear, and

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[178] Louise Amoore, 'Biometric borders: Governing mobilities in the war on terror', *Political Geography*, 25 (2006): 337

[179] Louise Amoore, 'Biometric borders': 338
[180] Louise Amoore, 'Biometric borders': 339
[181] William Walters, 'Border/Control', *European Journal of Social Theory*, 9-2 (2006): 189, 190

which have the market as their paradigm."[182] In these terms, Walters detects a 'delocalization' of the border in instances such as the US Enhanced Border Security and Visa Reform Act of 2002, which represents a greater effort to schedule policing and identification functions well before the traveller arrives at the border, but also, in certain cases, after they arrive on US soil.[183]

A parallel argument has been advanced by Benjamin J. Muller who contends that what he calls the 'biometric state' is motivated by an obsession with technologies of risk and practices of risk management, and is defined by the prevalence of virtual borders and reliance on biometric identifiers.[184] Like Walters, Muller compares Foucault with Deleuze and Guattari; in this case the Foucauldian *dispositif* with Deleuze and Guattari's *assemblage* and the 'war machine'. The biometric state of the post-9/11 world, writes Muller, makes some attempt to bring together the *dispositifs* of biopolitics and the geopolitics of security.[185]

Didier Bigo adopts a Foucauldian capillary view of power by rejecting its analysis "through legitimate and steady forms – that it is not coming from the top and going downward... but on the contrary where it is in direct relationship with its targets, where it moves, where, at its extremities, power goes beyond the Law, where the techniques and tactics of domination can be analyzed".[186] As a consequence, he attributes the securitization of immigration to the development of technologies of control and surveillance, as opposed to a causal relation in the opposite direction. In an extension of Foucault's work, Bigo suggests that the securitization of immigration and the strengthening of an "internal

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[182]   William Walters, 'Border/Control': 191
[183]   William Walters, 'Border/Control': 193
[184]   Benjamin J. Muller, 'Securing the Political Imagination: Popular Culture, the Security Dispositif and the Biometric State', *Security Dialogue*, 39-2-3 (2008): 199
[185]   Benjamin J. Muller, 'Securing the Political Imagination': 207
[186]   Didier Bigo, 'Security and immigration: Toward a critique of the governmentality of unease', *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 27 (2002), http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_hb3225/is_1_27/ai_n28906099/?tag=content;col1

security state"

constitute signs of a more general transformation in which a form of governmentality based on misgiving and unrest is substituted for a reassuring and protective pastoral power. The form of governmentality of postmodern societies is not a panopticon in which global surveillance is placed upon the shoulders of everybody, but a form of ban-opticon in which the technologies of surveillance sort out who needs to be under surveillance and who is free of surveillance, because of his profile.[187]

Not all analyses based on Foucault have been confined to issues of governmentality and biopolitics. Michael J. Shapiro offers a sophisticated account of what he calls 'violent cartographies', i.e. "historically developed, socially embedded interpretations of identity and space that constitute the frames within which enmities give rise to war-as-policy".[188] He refers to these cartographies as imaginaries, justified by openly adopting Foucault's principle: 'We must not imagine that the world turns toward us a legible face which we would have only to decipher'; how we have the world, he explains, "is a matter of the shape we impose on it, given the ideational commitments and institutional practices through which spatiotemporal models of identity-difference are created."[189] Thus, 'objective truth' is of no concern here, but how it is constructed through institutional practices and issues of identity.

Shapiro then draws a parallel between Foucault's archaeological investigation of medical perception and the war on terror by applying his notion of the spatialization of disease to the spatialization of

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[187]   Didier Bigo, 'Security and immigration'
[188]   Michael J. Shapiro, 'The New Violent Cartography', *Security Dialogue*, 38 (2007): 293
[189]   Michael J. Shapiro, 'The New Violent Cartography': 294

terrorism. Three kinds of spatialization are discerned by Foucault in medical practices and applied by Shapiro to terrorism: at the levels of classification, the space of the body and the administrative structure.[190]

Using the cases of abuse at Guantanamo as a starting point, Andrew W. Neal writes in favour of a Foucauldian "archaeology of the exception" [191], and against the discourses of exceptionalism of Carl Schmitt, Agamben and securitization theory. The problem, Neal explains, is that these discourses privilege a sovereign centre and by doing so "exceptionalism is successively reduced to, borrowing terms from Foucault (2002a: 226), a 'single system of differences' and to 'absolute axes of reference'"[192], such as the friend and enemy, the norm and the exception, bare life and political life, and politics and security. This dualism pursues the delimitation of unities, identities, categories and jurisdictions; limits which either attempt to mark off the domain of sovereign power, or the decision over their shape and location is accorded to sovereign power.[193]

Neal argues that following Foucault's Archaeology of Knowledge reveals that these theoretical approaches themselves "perpetuate the 'sovereign' structures of discourses" [194] by reifying a certain vision of sovereignty. In contrast, Neal is faithful to Foucault's recommendation of cutting the king's head[195]: "It is as if the discourse of exceptionalism contains a 'hidden discourse', a return of the 'same', a 'transcendental act that gives them origin' (Foucault, 2002a: 226). Foucault directly opposes all of

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[190]   Michael J. Shapiro, 'The New Violent Cartography': 300
[191]   Andrew W. Neal, 'Foucault in Guantánamo': 31
[192]   Andrew W. Neal, 'Foucault in Guantánamo': 34
[193]   Andrew W. Neal, 'Foucault in Guantánamo': 34
[194]   Andrew W. Neal, 'Foucault in Guantánamo': 36
[195]   Barry Hindess, *Discourses of Power: from Hobbes to Foucault* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996): 157. For a detailed discussion on this subject see chapter 2.

this."[196] Neal rejects overdetermined figures that pretend to carry transcendental, ontological, philosophical or metaphysical qualities, and instead defends an archaeological description of discursive formations in terms of appearance alone; a description which is historical, rather than formal or ideal.[197] In the case of the war on terror, "one should not identify a formal, unified and underlying exceptionalism as distinguished from the norm, as do Schmitt, Agamben and securitization theory, but only an array of dispersed appearances." [198]

While much can be learned from the works cited above, there is one main point that distinguishes them from my own analysis. These and other authors within the same tradition rarely challenge Foucault's basic epistemological principles – and indeed the principles of poststructuralism and constructivism in general. As critiques of Foucault are to be found almost exclusively in largely incompatible traditions, there is a lack of researches that place value in a Foucauldian framework while openly identifying its limitations and actively seeking notions that can compensate for the shortcomings. This is where I try to fill a void.

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[196]   Andrew W. Neal, 'Foucault in Guantánamo': 36
[197]   Andrew W. Neal, 'Foucault in Guantánamo': 37, 38
[198]   Andrew W. Neal, 'Foucault in Guantánamo': 45

Chapter 2

The Network of Power and Societies of discourse: Neoconservatism, the Israel lobby and other groups of influence

The discourse of the war on terrorism cannot be understood without the context in which it emerged. A series of power relations of specific groups of people with similar ideologies and points of view have converged at a point in time, allowing the appearance of this discourse. These actors are most directly responsible for its production – even if some of the themes of the discourses echo earlier American discourses of threat and insecurity. As noted in chapter 1, Foucault's method assumes "affiliations with institutions, agencies, classes, academies, corporations, groups, ideologically defined parties and professions."[199] Social groups, classes and categories shape a society with its "régime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth".[200] All of these concepts suggest the idea of a network of power. But in order to understand the nature of the network of power in the war on terrorism, a few critical remarks must be made about the notion of power as proposed by Foucault.

1. Capillary power and the need to recover the King's head

Foucault approached the subject of power firstly by proposing a deep connection between power and knowledge; and secondly, by his overall aim to produce a 'micro-physics of power'. His concern "was

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199   Derek Hook, 'Discourse, Knowledge, Materiality, History: Foucault and Discourse Analysis', *Theory & Psychology*, 11-4 (2001): 531, 532

200   Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972-1977* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980): 131

with 'structural relationships, institutions, strategies and techniques' rather than with 'concrete policies and the actual people they involve'."[201] While we are in debt to Foucault for highlighting the importance of the former, I do not believe that we can fully understand power without any reference to the specifics of the latter. As we shall see in this and the next chapter, it is impossible to understand the discourse of the war on terrorism without pointing out concrete policies, as well as language and practices, and the people involved.[202]

Foucault is concerned primarily with spatial technologies and procedures at the micro-level of power, while rejecting analyses that focus primarily on the state and state sovereignty. In his words:

> I would say that we should direct our researches on the nature of power not towards the juridical edifice of sovereignty, the State apparatuses and the ideologies which accompany them, but towards domination and the material operators of power, towards forms of subjection and the inflections and utilisations of their localised systems, and towards strategic apparatuses. We must eschew the model of the Leviathan in the study of power. We must escape from the limited field of juridical sovereignty and State institutions, and instead base our analysis of power on the study of the techniques and tactics of domination. [Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, p. 102][203]

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201   Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View* (UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005): 88, 89

202   To be fair, there is a sense in which Foucault was much concerned with the specifics of society and history. By using an empiric method, he analized specific historical procedures, institutions, techniques and strategies of power. The difference in here is that I believe that specificities should also refer to concrete people and groups of power, their geopolitical and ideological agendas, their concrete actions and use of language, and the contrast with the actual facts to which they make reference.

203   Jan Selby, 'Engaging Foucault: Discourse, Liberal Governance and the Limits of Foucauldian IR', *International Relations*, 21 (2007): 329

Foucault centred his analyses on "local sites of social discipline, regulation and normalisation; as well as on those administrative mechanisms... through which populations are governed as formally free subjects, and constituted 'at a distance'."[204] He argued that his analytics of power could be constituted only if it freed completely from the representation of power that he called "juridico-discursive", a certain image of power-law and power-sovereignty.[205] Instead, Foucault proposed a prioritization of micro manifestations of power – micro in comparison with the traditional grand structures. An analysis of power, Foucault says, "should be concerned with power at its extremities, in its ultimate destinations, with those points where it becomes capillary, that is, in its more regional and local forms and institutions".[206] One of the consequences of his approach is that power becomes something which circulates and which functions in the form of a chain rather than a pyramid. Having mobility, similar to the blood flowing in the smallest veins, it is never localised in a certain place, "never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power".[207]

Foucault's request to 'cut off the King's head' is to reject power-sovereignty. When he made it, it was a refreshing and liberating departure from traditional approaches to power, such as Marxism. We should welcome what appears to be his concern to radically escape the assumption of legitimacy in regards to sovereignty. Indeed, his concern with what he believed was an obsession of political theory being obsessed with the person of the sovereign is ultimately a concern with political consent as the basis of

204   Jan Selby, 'Engaging Foucault': 329

205   Bent Flyvbjerg, 'Habermas and Foucault: thinkers for civil society?', *British Journal of Sociology* 49-2 (June 1998): 214

206   Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*: 96

207   Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*: 98

the legitimacy of the sovereign. Barry Hindess explains: "In fact, the problem to which [Foucault's claim] alludes is symptomatic of a more general modern obsession with the idea of the person as autonomous agent, and consequently, with the idea that a community of such persons can, and should, be governed by the consent of its members."[208]

However, we should notice that Foucault's was not an ontological assertion in the sense that there is no power at the higher levels of society, nor an absolute denial of the freedom of action of individuals[209]; rather, it was a methodological proposal which he deemed more productive to understand power. It follows that complementing his analytics of power with traditional theories would not be *logically* incorrect – even with Marxism. I agree with Jan Selby, who recognizes that there are keen points of disagreement between Foucault and Marx, especially in philosophical matters, but who contends that putting these differences to one side, "there are also powerful parallels and convergences between Foucauldian and Marxist thought". He adds that some of the differences can be approached as complementary rather than antagonistic. Foucault was an analyst of the 'how' of power, while Marxist theory focuses on the 'why' of power within capitalist systems, which would make them mutually enriching.[210]

As Edward Said has noted, even if one fully agrees with Foucault's view that the microphysics of power is exercised rather than possessed, notions such as class and class struggle, the forcible taking of state power, economic domination, imperialist war, dependency relationships, and resistances to power

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208   Barry Hindess, *Discourses of Power: from Hobbes to Foucault* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996): 157

209   Hindess explains that Foucault's notion of power as 'strategic games between liberties' suggests an intimate relation between power and liberty. As Foucault presents it, power would be the 'total structure of actions' bearing on "the actions of individuals who are free". Barry Hindess, *Discourses of Power*: 99, 100

210   Jan Selby, 'Engaging Foucault': 340, 341

cannot be reduced "to the status of superannuated nineteenth-century conceptions of political economy… a great deal of power remains in such coarse items as the relationships and tensions between rulers and ruled, wealth and privilege, monopolies of coercion, and the central state apparatus".[211] Said recognizes that Foucault's work is an important alternative to the ahistorical formalism with which he has been conducting an implicit debate,

> but all that is quite another thing from accepting Foucault's view in *History of Sexuality* that "power is everywhere" along with all that such a vastly simplified view entails. For one, as I have said, Foucault's eagerness not to fall into Marxist economism causes him to obliterate the role of classes, the role of economics, the role of insurgency and rebellion in the societies he discusses.[212]

Said further argues that Foucault's thinking on power is marked by an underestimation of historical forces such as profit, ambitions, ideas, or the sheer love of power.[213] Indeed, in spite of Foucault's interest in history, empiricism and *apparently* agency, he misses central elements of power with his insistence on renouncing the "labyrinthine and unanswerable question" of who has power and what is his aim.[214]

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211   Edward Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (London-Boston: Faber and Faber, 1983-1984): 221

212   Edward Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic*: 244

213   Edward Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic*: 222

214   Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*: 97. The question of the aim of people in power is certainly difficult, or perhaps impossible, to answer since we cannot read people's minds. Yet it seems to me that renouncing to it would have the effect of limiting our understanding of politics. I would prefer us to forget about our pretension of achieving absolute certainty on such a matter, and replacing it with more or less determined degrees of probability sustained by the available evidence. The question of the goal of power can be then answered based on the observable effective practices After all, it is not unreasonable to assume, for example, that a government is planning a war when an inordinate amount of resources is being invested on weapons and army. Yet it is true that we would never find enough evidence to prove beyond doubt that

To take Foucault's request to the extreme and renounce the analysis of sovereignty, law, ideology and related elements of power would turn out to be a limitation. In the case of the war on terrorism, a specific network of power sharing certain ideological themes requires that we do not focus exclusively on techniques of domination at the capillary level. While the network cannot be totally identified with a class or with judicial sovereignty, in its privileged position in the higher levels of society from which to wage power on a macro-level, it can function as such. Furthermore, power and discourse find their way into, and are exercised through, law and sovereignty, as we will see in this and the following chapters.

As the reader may already see, a parallel debate implicit here is that of agency versus structure. We may gain useful insights from a brief comparison. In a volume dedicated to the agency-structure debate, Colin Wight observes that continental structuralists believed that societies, myths, works of literature and so on have the 'structure of language', while poststructuralists have taken this further by arguing that language is a meta-structure that structures all the others. Both "take the structure of one human domain as the model for other domains."[215] Similarly, Roxanne Lynn Doty proposes that poststructuralism can lead to a radical way of conceptualising the agent-structure issue in which the ontology of agents and structures is replaced by an ontology of indeterminate practices. Her solution to the agent-structure problem is that agents and structures are effects of practices.[216] If we were to translate Foucault into a position that addresses the agent-structure debate, we would probably end up

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such is the goal.

215   Colin Wight, *Agents, Structures and International Relations: Politics as Ontology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 133

216   Roxanne Lynn Doty, 'Aporia: a Critical Exploration of the Agent-Structure Problematique in International Relations Theory', *European Journal of International Relations* 3-3 (1997): 365-392, quoted in Colin Wight, *Agents, Structures and International Relations*: 82

with something similar to a poststructural position or Doty's argument, except that 'practices' and the 'structure of language' would extend to include knowledge, discourses, institutions, discipline and technologies of power. These added elements would have primacy over both agents and structure. While it has been a remarkable contribution to point out the importance of practices, language, knowledge and discourses, they do not replace nor explain away agents and structure. Wight writes:

[I]n constructing an account of structure derived from linguistics and applying this to all domains of social activity, poststructuralists are unable [to] link together the various domains of social life. Indeed, all social life is to be read as a text, and the underlying ontology is flat, one-dimensional and reductionist. This seriously underplays the specifics of the differential planes of social life. Moreover, where agents do play a role it is only in terms of the structural imperatives of the structures. Indeed, in many poststructuralist accounts agency is located in structures. Despite the repeated references to the construction of social life and the construction of social principles, it is not agents who do this construction but the structural logics of relations of difference, even if this logic is indeterminate. Agents, or selves, are mere ciphers for the universal principles of language. They are not even, as should be clear, positivities. Indeed, agents, much like the structurality of structure, are actually an illusion.[217]

Foucault was "an empirically grounded theorist of historical shifts in the relations between knowledge, institutions and the constitution of subjects,"[218] and as such he could not be accused of reducing the ontology of society to language. However, the essence of Wight's criticism applies to him as well. The problem is that specific groups of power with specific objectives and modus operandi are neither

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217 Colin Wight, *Agents, Structures and International Relations*: 136, 137
218 Jan Selby, 'Engaging Foucault': 330

knowledge, institutions nor the constitution of subjects – although they are indeed related and immersed in these. If Foucault's emphasis is on power being everywhere and manifesting through knowledge, institutions, discourse, strategies and practices, there is little to no room left for analyzing agents and the effect of their specific actions and use of language. This is not to suggest that all speakers are of equal authority. Nor that those with the most authority are entirely free from discourse and can therefore shape it at will. Rather, that in spite of the structural qualities of power and discourse, agency is still possible and we need to acknowledge it if the case study at hand suggests so. Therefore, detecting which are the specific social groups and actors that may produce the discourse on the war on terrorism is one task of this chapter.

The production of discourse is not a direct cause and effect relationship in the sense that no one of the agents or groups involved is solely responsible for its consequences, but all have had parts to play with different degrees of success. Rather, the ideals, objectives and language of these groups resonate with each other, constituting a loose network of power that as a whole has produced the discourse. This network is neither a monolithic nor a well defined unit. It does not have a permanent hold of power and it suffers transformations: its members occupy different positions throughout time and there is no guarantee that those who are most prominent will be so in the near future, or that the network as a whole will continue to have the influence it holds at the moment. The way in which power circulates among the members of this elite – more like a currency than a permanent privilege – is in some measure similar to Foucault's notion of capillary power, with the difference that the 'small blood veins' in question are to be found in the higher levels of society and not the lower.

2. Societies of Discourse and Doctrines

While Foucault emphasizes strategies of power rather than ideologies, I do not believe that the latter should be entirely dismissed. In fact, Foucault's own notions of the discursive principles of exclusion of *societies of discourse* and *doctrine* suggest the relevance of ideologies. While *societies of discourse* produce discourse and preserve it within its own closed environment under strict rules, the *doctrine* echoes in the open environment of public debate with the possibility of affecting society at large. The principle of a *society of discourse* is at work in the US network of government, military and intelligence communities, since the discourse is produced under strict rules and largely in a closed space. However, think tanks, research institutions, ideological organizations and lobby groups offer a clearer example of such societies in their role of producing and preserving *doctrines*, given their clearly ideological character. By contrast, the 'truths' produced by government authorities are often presented as having no ideal other than the common good in the forms of 'democracy', 'freedom', 'security' or any other widely shared contemporary values.

This is not to say that government authorities and ideological groups are independent from each other. Our examination of the network of power relations will mention the most prominent of these think tanks, institutions and organizations that have a significant role in the discourse of the war on terror, and it will be observed that these often overlapped with the government. Bureaucrats with life-long careers, such as Dick Cheney or Donald Rumsfeld, are members of the *Project for the New American Century*, an institution with explicitly ideological objectives. Their Statement of Principles calls for "American global leadership" through "military strength and moral clarity".[219]

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219   'Statement of Principles, June 3, 1997', *Project for the New American Century*
(http://www.newamericancentury.org/statementofprinciples.htm, 2005)

It is from the *doctrine* shared by these *societies of discourse*, intertwined with their power relations, that the themes and elements of the discourse of the war on terrorism emerged in the way we have known them since 2001. It could be said that the discourse of the war on terrorism is a specific incarnation of the *doctrine* shared by these *societies of discourse*.

It is the principle of *doctrine* that links these organizations and individuals together. Though the stated goals of the different ideological groups are not necessarily the same, they are often close to each other and complementary in their work allowing for the same people – the adepts of the *doctrine* – to contribute to or be members of more than one group. Neoconservative Irving Kristol, also a member of the Israel lobby, is a senior fellow of the American Enterprise Institute, which declares as its purpose "to defend the principles and improve the institutions of American freedom and democratic capitalism – limited government, private enterprise, individual liberty and responsibility, vigilant and effective defense and foreign policies, political accountability, and open debate."[220] This appears as a summary of the version of the *doctrine* as understood by the members of the AEI. Elsewhere, the emphasis may be not on "American freedom and democratic capitalism", but on strategic cooperation with the state of Israel, considered the only true democracy in the Middle East (e.g. JINSA[221] or AIPAC[222]), or on US military supremacy (PNAC).

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220   'AEI's Organization and Purposes', *American Enterprise Institute* (http://www.aei.org/about/filter.all/default.asp, 2005)

221   'JINSA's Major Agenda Items', *The Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs*, (http://www.jinsa.org/about/agenda/agenda.html 2005)

222   'Our Current Agenda', *The American Israel Public Affairs Committee* (http://www.aipac.org/currentAgenda.cfm, 2005)

We observe that the different themes that concern the members of this network do not necessarily follow each other as logical consequences. The defence of freedom and democratic capitalism does not automatically imply support for Israel or militarism. Thus, we find that the *doctrine* is not so much a unifying principle but one which manifests through *discontinuities* and *dispersion* – in accordance with Foucault – and that in its *dispersion* it morphs into the discursive formation that deals with post-9/11 terrorism.

2.1 *Resonance*

Rather than identifying neoconservatism as the single and ultimate cause of the discourse of the war on terrorism, it is be better to characterize it as the most influential of the groups of a network that resonate with each other. The idea of resonance has been explained by William E. Connolly:

> [I]n politics diverse elements infiltrate into the others, metabolizing into a moving complex – Causation as resonance between elements that become fused together to a considerable degree. Here causality, as relations of dependence between separate factors, morphs into energized complexities of mutual imbrication and interinvolvement, in which heretofore unconnected or loosely associated elements fold, bend, blend, emulsify, and dissolve into each other, forging a qualitative assemblage resistant to classical models of explanation.[223]

Therefore, it would not be entirely accurate to suggest a linear cause-effect relationship between power and discourse, where one or a few masterminds have consciously decided everything that is to be said

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[223]   William E. Connolly, 'The Evangelical-Capitalist Resonance Machine', *Political Theory*, 33-6 (December 2005): 870

and how for a clear and specific purpose. Each group within the network affects the others inter-dynamically and to different degrees in terms of both ideology and power, even if their ideologies do not necessarily conform to each other as a coherent whole. While some characters play major roles, none of them has complete control of the resulting discourse;[224] nor is their influence exempt from change or termination. In this sense the discourse – a complex set of discontinuous proposals and assumptions which morph through time and which are not entirely controlled by anyone in particular – gains a life of its own by growing out of a network of power which is more than the sum of its parts.

3. Neoconservatism

Before examining the complexities of the themes of the discourse itself we need to contextualize it within a description of the network of power most directly responsible for its production. However, what follows is not only intended as a platform to understand the discourse, but also as a way of showing that the ideological specificities of groups of power in privileged levels of society have a major role to play in the production of a discourse, highlighting in this way a limitation of a Foucauldian approach. That these groups and their ideologies are directly related to the themes of the discourse will become clearer in chapter 3, where I examine the themes themselves.

A note of clarification is necessary here. In this section I refer to neoconservative ideological thinking; but ideology should not be necessary equated with discourse as Foucault understands it. Foucault was reluctant to use the term 'ideology' because he thought it always stood in virtual opposition to

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224   This is not to say that Connolly was primarily interested in the production of a particular discourse. His interest seems to be the idea of resonance itself.

something else which was supposed to count as truth.[225] For this reason, he preferred the more neutral and generic term 'discourse'. This word also lacks the implication of intent that 'ideology' carries and which is not implied by Foucauldian discourse analysis. However, I have chosen to refer to 'ideology' because it best describes the well defined set of aspirational, and thus intentional, ideas of neoconservatism. As the cluster of rules of what can be articulated or not, discourse is a wider encompassing phenomenon; it runs deeper through historical and social categories; it manifests through spoken words, text and practices; it finds its embodiment in science and institutions. In contrast, an ideology is a system of ideas that aspires to explain the world and to change it. The word 'ideology' was first introduced by A.L.C. Destutt at the time of the French Revolution, and it was partly inspired by Francis Bacon's belief that science should improve the life of men and not just expand knowledge. Destutt's ideology as a 'science of ideas' was a science with a mission.[226] If we are to introduce the term 'ideology' to designate a system of ideas with a social or political aim, we must identify it as a particular manifestation of discourse, while avoiding the automatic identification of the two terms.

It will be noted that in the description that follows the outgoing president of the US, George W. Bush, is not mentioned as often as other less known characters. One of the reasons is that Bush was new to foreign policy when he became president in 2000, and, as he has insisted himself, his decisions have been nurtured by a group of advisers with a long experience in the subject, both in the academy and policy making.[227] Another is that it is possible to identify the influence that the men and women holding positions of power have had, to such an extent that Bush's words and actions have followed previous documents prepared by these people almost exactly. If his personality had any particular bearing on the production of the discourse apart from the network that surrounds him, it is not apparent

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[225] Michel Foucault, 'Truth and Power', in Paul Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon, 1984): 60
[226] *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Macropedia, Knowledge in Depth*, (15th Edition, 2002, Volume 20): 768
[227] James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans, The History of the Bush's War Cabinet* (USA: Penguin Books, 2004): ix-xi

what it was.

It is widely believed that a specific group of influence known as neoconservatism has been of paramount influence on the war on terrorism. Even self proclaimed conservatives such as Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke judge that the current brand of US policy against terrorism that allowed the war on Iraq "closely reflected the established neo-conservative position and neo-conservative interventions in the policy process." [228]

The most appropriate way to view neoconservatism is as a "special interest" or "faction". Special interests are associations "representing the interests of their members to secure for themselves a privileged seat at the national decision-making table".[229] MIT professor Gene Grossman defines them as "any minority group of voters that shares identifiable characteristics and similar concerns".[230] Historically, the neoconservative faction has consisted of intellectuals and elitists who tend to be of Jewish or Catholic background, many of whom seem to have lapsed to secular humanism.[231] The group has also been identified as "unipolarism", "democratic globalism", "neo-Manifest Destinarianism", "neo-imperialism", "Pax Americanism", "neo-Reaganism", and "liberal imperialism".[232]

This special interest includes individuals who hold or have held positions in government, such as Chief of Staff to Vice-President Dick Cheney, I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby, until his resignation in late 2005

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228   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone: The Neo-Conservatives and the Global Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004): 32

229   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 37

230   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 38

231   Coral Bell, *The Reagan Paradox, American Foreign Policy in the 1980s* (Rutgers University Press, 1989): 10

232   Gary Dorrien, *Imperial Designs, Neoconservatism and the New Pax Americana* (UK: Routledge, 2004): 1-5

after the investigation on the Valerie Plame affair resulted in charges against him; Special Advisor to President Bush, Elliott Abrams; Deputy Secretary of Defence with the Bush Administration, Paul D. Wolfowitz, later appointed head of the World Bank; and State Department officials John R. Bolton, later appointed US ambassador the UN, and David Wurmser. On governmental advisory bodies Eliot A. Cohen occupies a position on the Defence Policy Board, a position that was also held by Richard Perle until recently.

Perhaps most important are Vice-President Dick Cheney and former Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who would be better described as American nationalists than as neoconservatives, but whose careers and views, such as those concerning American exceptionalism and unilateralism, have run closely to those of neoconservatism. Both their signatures can be found on a key neoconservative document, the 1997 Statement of Principles by the Project for the New American Century.

Neoconservatives can also be found in the academy: for example Yale professor Donald Kagan, Princeton professors Bernard Lewis and Aaron Friedberg; in the media, *Weekly Standard* editor William Kristol, *Washington Post* columnist Charles Krauthammer, and most foreign policy editorialists on the *Wall Street Journal* and the Fox News Channel; in business, former CIA Director James Woolsey; and in research institutions, Max Boot at the Council on Foreign Relations, Norman Podhoretz and Meyrav Wursmer at the Hudson Institute, any member of the Project for the New American Century, and most foreign or Defence studies scholars at the American Enterprise Institute.[233] This list is not all-inclusive, but it should serve to illustrate the range of positions held by neoconservatives.

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233   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 14

It would be difficult to fully characterize or explain the relevance and details of a faction such as this one under strictly Foucauldian terms. As noted above, the notions of *society of discourse* and *doctrine* provide a platform in terms of shared discursive or ideological understandings; however, they miss the elitist aspect of the political power of a faction.

Additionally, for a Foucauldian approach the impossibility of making sense of the world without a discursive standpoint suggests that the members of the faction do not find themselves outside of a discourse. This is correct, but it raises the problem that it could lead some to conclude – incorrectly in my view – that the members of the faction are not able to influence the production of the discourse in any significant way, and thus the specificities of their beliefs and positions of influence, i.e. their capabilities as agents, are ultimately irrelevant. I hope to show in this chapter and the following that these specificities have indeed had an important influence on the discourse of the war on terrorism.

3.1 *An Introduction to Neoconservative Doctrine*

Neoconservatives have a tendency to see or depict the world of international politics in black and white: a struggle between good and evil. It is a doctrine which finds its origins and early development specifically in the context of the relation between Moscow and Washington in the late twentieth century;[234] and between the US as the centre of democratic societies and rogue nations in the early twenty-first. As we will see in chapter 3, one of the central themes of the discourse of the war on terrorism is a global dichotomy where the US stands for democratic values and has as its mission to confront tyranny abroad.

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234   Coral Bell, *The Reagan Paradox*: 12

According to neoconservative Irving Kristol, there is no set of neoconservative beliefs concerning foreign policy, only a set of attitudes derived from historical experience that can be summarized in four "theses": first, patriotism should be encouraged; second, international institutions should be regarded "with the deepest suspicion"; third, statesmen should make a clear distinction between friends and enemies, since it was a mistake for some to not count the Soviet Union as an enemy; and finally, for a great power, the "national interest" is not a geographical term, but also an ideological one. Therefore,

> Barring extraordinary events, the United States will always feel obliged to defend, if possible, a democratic nation under attack from nondemocratic forces, external or internal. That is why it was in our national interest to come to the defence of France and Britain in World War II. That is why we feel it necessary to defend Israel today, when its survival is threatened. No complicated geopolitical calculations of national interest are necessary.[235]

This Wilsonian notion of the spread of democracy is not pure idealism; it is also based on the supposition that if democracy and the rule of law are established in troubled countries around the world, they will cease to be threats. The promotion of democracy is not left to economic development and political engagement; if necessary, it is provided through military force. Some think-tank "fundamentalists" – as G. John Ikenberry identifies them – such as Tom Donnelly and Max Boot, go even further and argue for formal quasi-imperial control over strategically valuable failed states, backed up by new American bases and an imperial civil service.[236]

We could add to those theses the following common themes: a belief that the human condition is

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235   Irving Kristol, 'The Neoconservative Persuasion', *The Weekly Standard*, 8-47 (August 25, 2003)

236   G. John Ikenberry, 'The End of the Neo-Conservative Moment', *Survival*, 46-1 (2004): 8-10

defined as a choice between good and evil and that the former (themselves) should have the political character to confront the latter; a willingness to use military power; and a primary focus on the Middle East and global Islam as the principal theatre for American overseas interests. The parallels with the themes of the war on terrorism are again apparent, since the discourse proposes that we live in an era of unprecedented danger, and that the solution is to be found in the moral leadership and military supremacy of the US who asks its citizens and the rest of the world to accept exceptional measures.

In putting their ideas into practice neoconservatives analyse international issues in absolute moral categories; focus on the "unipolar" power of the US, seeing the use of force as the first, not the last option of foreign policy; disdain of conventional diplomatic agencies such as the State Department and conventional country-specific, realist, and pragmatic analysis; and are hostile toward nonmilitary multilateral institutions and instinctively antagonistic toward international treaties and agreements.[237] If there is any good to multilateralism it is as a tool of American power. As Robert Kagan has famously put it, "multilateralism is a weapon of the weak". Or in Max Boot's words: "Power breeds unilateralism. It is as simple as that".[238]

Based on the above beliefs and approaches neoconservatives tend to find themselves in confrontational postures with the Muslim world, with some US allies, with the need for cooperation in the United Nations, and with those within their country who disagree with them and their objectives.[239] The discourse of the war on terrorism echoes the confrontational postures through a theme of 'us vs them', where the other is 'the other' is a vaguely defined terrorist enemy, sometimes identified with Muslim or

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237   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 11

238   G. John Ikenberry, 'The End of the Neo-Conservative Moment': 15

239   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 12

Arab societies and others with an 'axis of evil' of 'rogue states'.

3.1.1 *Emphasis on Military Might and US Exceptionalism*

Robert Kagan and William Kristol's book of 2000, *Present Dangers: Crisis and Opportunities in American Foreign and Defence Policy*, which includes a wide range of contributions from fellow neoconservatives, provides something close to their canon. Kagan and Kristol speak of establishing the "standard of a global superpower that intends to shape the international environment to its own advantage," and decry a narrow definition of the US' "vital interests" arguing that "America's moral purposes and national interests are identical."[240]

Their introductory chapter proposes to create

> a strong America capable of projecting force quickly and with devastating effect on important regions of the world. [An America which would act] as if instability in important regions of the world, and the flouting of civilised rules of conduct in those regions, were threats that affected us with almost the same immediacy, [and which] conceives of itself as at once a European power, an Asian power, a Middle Eastern power and, of course, a Western Hemisphere power.

> A principal aim of American foreign policy should be to bring about a change of regime in hostile nations – in Baghdad and Belgrade, in Pyongyang and Beijing and wherever tyrannical governments acquire the military power to threaten their neighbours, our allies and the United

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240   Robert Kagan and William Kristol, *Present Dangers: Crisis and Opportunity in American Foreign and Defence Policy* (2000): 13, 14

States.

> [W]hen it comes to dealing with tyrannical regimes... the United States should seek not coexistence but transformation.[241]

It is easy to identify this projection of neoconservative global intent as a blueprint for what was to become later known as the Bush Doctrine.[242]

The unipolarists emphasize that the US is not like other nations but also maintain that other nations should be more like it, without a doubt supported in the long imagined idea that their country is an exception to history.[243] In turn, exceptionalism supports the argument that military power must be returned to the centre of American foreign policy. For early neoconservatives of the 1970s, foreign policy in the post-Vietnam era had become too liberal and soft, and unwilling to confront Soviet expansionism. Years later they argued that during the Clinton era the US was not taken seriously as a global military power because of Clinton's reluctance to use real force in Iraq; and when enemies stop fearing the US, they are emboldened to strike.[244]

The promotion of force has also a certain degree of admiration and fascination with the capabilities of the US military, as Irving Kristol's words reveal:

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241   Robert Kagan and William Kristol, *Present Dangers*: 17-20, cited in Jim George, 'Leo Strauss, Neoconservatism and US Foreign Policy: Esoteric Nihilism and the Bush Doctrine', *International Politics*, 42 (2005): 190, 191

242   Jim George, 'Leo Strauss, Neoconservatism and US Foreign Policy': 190

243   Gary Dorrien, *Imperial Designs*: 18

244   G. John Ikenberry, 'The End of the Neo-Conservative Moment': 8-10

Behind all [the neoconservative convictions about foreign policy there] is a fact: the incredible military superiority of the United States vis-à-vis the nations of the rest of the world, in any imaginable combination. [...] With power come responsibilities, whether sought or not, whether welcome or not. And it is a fact that if you have the kind of power we now have, either you will find opportunities to use it, or the world will discover them for you.[245]

Max Boot looks forward to a new era when the US, like the British Empire, will always be fighting some war, somewhere in the globe.[246] Likewise, Professor Eliot Cohen of the Defence Policy Board and former CIA Director James Woolsey have suggested that the US is now "on the march" in "World War IV".[247] It should come as no surprise, then, that for neoconservatives, the applicability of force is the default measure against terrorism. David Frum and Richard Perle's book *An End to Evil*, sets out at full length the remedy for terror and tyranny that underlies the Bush foreign policy: using military force to overthrow noncooperative governments in troubled areas.[248] Compare these ideas with international events that took place in the context of the war on terrorism, i.e. the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq and their rationale, which were predicated on the basis of confronting and pre-empting terrorism and tyranny.

3.1.2 *The Middle East and Israel*

Both Kagan and Kristol's book and Frum and Perle's are mostly dedicated to the Middle East, the need for a strong military, and Islamic-inspired terrorism as the only foreign policy challenge to the US.

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245   Irving Kristol, 'The Neoconservative Persuasion'
246   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 27, 28
247   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 29
248   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 144

Similarly, scholars at the *Project for the New American Century* pour most of their energies into the Middle East and members of *Americans for Victory over Terrorism* do so completely. Their views are very specific and tend to be hostile towards the peace process and Islam.

Since the 1970s neoconservative publications have focused on defence of US policies concerning Israel. For example, the neoconservative *Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs* was established following the 1973 Yom Kippur War, "partially at the prompting of the Pentagon for a counterbalance to liberal sniping at Defence spending."[249] Podhoretz provided a pro-Israeli voice in what many neoconservatives of the time thought of as an intellectual community lacking in support for Israel as the only genuine democracy in the Middle East. He also maintained that anti-Zionism was simply a mask of anti-Semitism and that it was often found among anti-American and radicals. Thus, commitment to Israel's security and right to exist and a patriotic support of US values were inextricably linked for many neoconservatives.

During the Cold War, intellectuals such as Midge Decter, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, and Podhoretz argued that the UN, Communism, and much of the Third World was anti-Semitic, along with large portions of the US intellectual community; therefore the US and Israel shared a common ideological struggle against common enemies.[250]

The historical neoconservative commitment to Israel has been so pronounced that even traditional conservatives like Russell Kirk have charged them with mistaking "Tel Aviv for the capital of the

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249   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 58
250   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 19, 20, 58- 60

United States".[251] Similarly, Patrick Buchanan, who had been sceptical of the need for war with Iraq and challenged George Bush for the 1992 Republican presidential nomination, commented that neoconservative "tactics – including the smearing of opponents as racists, nativists, fascists, and anti-Semites – left many conservatives wondering if we hadn't made a terrible mistake when we brought these ideological vagrants in off the street and gave them a place by the fire."[252] These comments sparked a debate over whether or not Buchanan was anti-Semitic.[253]

Notice that the support for Israel above any other countries is not a theme that can be explained as a consequence of a manifestation or affirmation of an overall socio-historical discourse of American identity. This suggests the relevance of the specific world-views of actors within neoconservatism. As we will see below and in chapter 3, there are examples of manifestations of discourse within the war on terrorism that confirm the importance of this idea, mostly shown through the open and strong support of the US government to Israel as well as a certain confrontational attitude towards Islam and Arabs. The point is that this connection highlights the influence of elite factions with particular ideologies in the formation of the discourse.

3.2 *Philosophical and ideological origins*

3.2.1 *Leo Strauss*

If we only read the above summary of neoconservative ideas we could be excused for believing with

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251   John Ehrman, *The Rise of Neoconservatism, Intellectuals and Foreign Affairs 1945-1994* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995): 186

252   John Ehrman, *The Rise of Neoconservatism*: 186

253   John Ehrman, *The Rise of Neoconservatism*: 186

John Samples that neoconservatism has been "as much about politics as principles. ...They believed that the striving for national greatness would appeal to American idealism and create a new Republican majority."[254] Even if we do not share those ideals, we would be forced to conclude that it is a form of idealism, and indeed, several commentators do so. Nonetheless, there is an alternative interpretation of one of the possible philosophical origins of neoconservatism which must be mentioned, for it would disclose the connection between the *will to power* and the *will to truth* that Foucault identified.

While some political analysts think of the University of Chicago professor Leo Strauss as the intellectual inspiration for neoconservatives (some studied with him or with lecturers that followed his ideas in the 1960s),[255] others claim that his influence is exaggerated and that there is no direct link between him and positions of power in Washington.[256] According to James Mann,[257] among the intellectual heirs of Strauss we find William Kristol, William Bennett, Francis Fukuyama, Harvard University Professor Harvey Mansfield and a few officials in the Pentagon and national security community; while Paul Wolfowitz thought of Strauss as a unique and irreplaceable figure. In 2002, the former ambassador to the UN Jean Kirkpatrick remarked in an interview that "Wolfowitz is still a leading Straussian",[258] although Wolfowitz himself disliked "the label [Straussian], because I don't like labels all that much".[259] Modern neoconservatives generally write in good terms about Strauss, but they also deny that they owe any debt to him, and some even say they are not familiar with his work.

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254   John Samples, 'The Rise and Fall of conservative Reform in the United States: George Bush and the Transformation of the Reagan Legacy', *Asia-Pacific Review*, 11-2 (2004): 101

255   Gary Dorrien, *Imperial Designs*: 16

256   Gary Dorrien, *Imperial Designs*: 16

257   James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*: 26-29

258   James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*: 29

259   James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*: 29

However, while his importance may indeed be overstated, we can find parallels between his perspectives and those of neoconservatives, and thus the link should be considered as a possible influence or background. This is not to suggest neither that all neoconservatives are following Strauss, nor that those who do are following him consistently nor methodically, but to recognize that some influential neoconservatives in and with links to the Bush administration have connections to Straussianism in their published works, statements, attitudes and policy perspectives.[260]

Strauss used classical texts – not only the Greek, but also Christian, Jewish and Muslim sacred writings – to comment on modern tyrannies, which he thought were the product of modernity's rejection of the values of classical societies that were hierarchically ordered and supported in religiosity. Strauss believed democracy could not enforce its own paradigm if it could not confront tyranny, which he believed was inherently expansionist. He argued that the European emphasis on human reason deriving from the Enlightenment represented a decline in religion-based values and not an advance, deploring a secular political order for its "movement away from the recognition of a superhuman authority – whether of revelation based on Divine will or a natural order – to a recognition of the exclusively human based authority of the State."[261] James Mann identifies as one of Strauss' core ideas "a denunciation of the spirit of moral tolerance that, he argued, had come to dominate intellectual life in Europe and the United States". He points out that Strauss was worried about relativism and liberalism because they could degenerate into "the easygoing belief that all points of view are equal (hence, none really worth passionate argument, deep analysis or stalwart defense) and then into the strident belief that anyone who argues for the superiority of a distinctive moral insight, way of life, or human type is

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260   Jim George, 'Leo Strauss, Neoconservatism and US Foreign Policy': 177

261   Cited in Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 64, 65

somehow elitist or antidemocratic – and hence immoral".[262]

As with neoconservatism, such a position reveals a concern for principles and moral values. Nevertheless, the significance of these values seems to be exclusively pragmatic – even nihilistic. In a more sophisticated interpretation of Strauss, Jim George argues that to the emphasis on national and cultural unity and the simple religious and philosophical morality, we would have to add as part of Strauss's legacy to neoconservatism a "war culture" as the basis for that unity, along with the notion that "elite rule is crucial" and the belief that "the neoconservative elite has the right and indeed the obligation to lie to the masses in order that the 'right' political and strategic decisions be made and implemented. Hence, the use of the so-called 'noble lie'."[263]

According to George, Strauss was not the conventional conservative philosopher that he appears to be; instead, he was a philosophical nihilist influenced by Carl Schmitt, Heidegger and a particular reading of Nietzsche. For Strauss,

> the fundamental truth of the Western philosophical tradition is a nihilist truth: that all morality, all notions of justice, all distinctions between good and evil *are actually matters of power* and interpretation and political ideology – not metaphysical or theological irreducibility... *Consequently, in the most natural and most just regimes the cleverest and strongest should rule the weak, for the good of society as a whole.* [The ancient scholars guarded and concealed this

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262   James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*: 26

263   Jim George, 'Leo Strauss, Neoconservatism and US Foreign Policy': 174

knowledge]*, hence their reliance on esoteric deception as a way of protecting themselves.*[264]

[Emphasis added]

If George is correct, it is here where the *will to power* is being made explicit within this particular form of political philosophical. What is of interest for us is the possibility that the misrepresentations of facts that can be detected in the war on terrorism might be to some extent an application of the idea of 'noble lies', rather than mere crude lies. It is now generally regarded as part of the historical record that the case for the war on Iraq was built on false connections to the 11 September attacks and unreliable evidence of weapons of mass destruction.[265]

This interpretation would explain why Strauss thought that the development of a new breed of ruling intellectuals – modern "philosopher kings" – was vital. They would project a hidden ("esoteric") truth based on simple moral precepts for modern societies to be able to face tyranny. The elite would be a necessity, since in his view, democracy:

> had become little more than a vulgar and futile attempt to create equality in a naturally unequal world... This clearly troubled Strauss, to the extent that, among many other things, he shared with Nietzsche the belief that 'the history of western civilization has led to the triumph of the inferior'. A prospect that terrified them both.[266]

Therefore, the intellectual elite would need to tell "noble lies" not only to people but also to powerful

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264   Jim George, 'Leo Strauss, Neoconservatism and US Foreign Policy': 177

265   G. John Ikenberry, 'The End of the Neo-Conservative Moment': 19

266   Jim George, 'Leo Strauss, Neoconservatism and US Foreign Policy': 178

politicians. George observes that in 2000 William Kristol implicitly recognized this when he explained that a major teaching of Strauss was that no political position was really based on the truth.[267]

Strauss also advocated a reawakening of "a reverence for myth and transcendental illusion among the masses." Again, George's argument seems to find confirmation by another Kristol – Irving – who acknowledged that the neoconservative movement had taken up the Straussian strategy of "explicit and strong support for religion – even if such support contradicted one's own atheism". Thus, according to Kristol, "neoconservatives are pro-religion even though they themselves may not be believers"; a position that has been described as "noble hypocrisy" by Ronald Bailey.[268]

Another commentator of Strauss, Shadia Drury, shares George's interpretation and argues that Strauss admired the ancients because in his view, "they believed that society needs an elite of philosophers or intellectuals to manufacture "noble lies" for the consumption of the masses."[269] She also notes that like Marx, Strauss believed that religion was the opium of the masses, but unlike him, Strauss believed that masses needed opium.[270] Drury elaborates:

> Strauss's elitism is among the most radical that has ever been encountered in the history of Western thought. Woven throughout Strauss's philosophy is the theme of the dramatic gap between the wise and the vulgar. The wise are those who are capable of experiencing the truth

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267   Jim George, 'Leo Strauss, Neoconservatism and US Foreign Policy': 179

268   Cited in Jim George, 'Leo Strauss, Neoconservatism and US Foreign Policy': 180

269   Shadia Drury, 'Leo Strauss and the neoconservatives', *Evat Foundation*, (http://evatt.labor.net.au/publications/papers/112.html, Jan 5th, 2009)

270   Heer (http://www.jeetheer.com/politics/strauss.html, 2003) cited in Jim George, 'Leo Strauss, Neoconservatism and US Foreign Policy': 181

in peace, whereas the vulgar are destroyed by it. The wise are capable of living happily in the face of the naked truth, whereas the vulgar need noble delusions. The wise are those who fabricate the noble lies, the vulgar are those who consume them.[271]

In the interpretation espoused by George and Drury, another form of myth that would need to be created for the sake of the unity of the populace is that of an enemy to fight, "so that they can be reminded of the meaningfulness and precariousness of their culture and polity."[272] Here we see further parallels with the current discourse of the war on terrorism, a 'war' that from this interpretation of Strauss is not only waged against the external, but also against the domestic forces of individualism, historicism and relativism.[273]

An argument could be made for a third possible interpretation: that Strauss did believe in the intrinsic value of truth and morality, but that they faced such a threat from tyrannical forces in politics and relativism in political science, that the intellectual elite had no option but to make use of any means, even those that the 'vulgar' would not approve of, such as lying. Ultimately, what makes the difference in the various interpretations of Strauss is whether his primary concern was the elite retaining its privileges or the well-being of society in general. However, in terms of the practical application of his thought the end result would be the same; an enlightened elite would still be required to take any necessary steps to lead the population to the desired goal, including the presentation of morals/myths or lies for a 'noble' purpose.

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271   Shadia Drury, *The Political Ideas of Leo Strauss*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988): 194, 195

272   Havers and Wexler (http://www.lsus.edu/la/journals/ideology/contents/neoconservatism.htm), cited in Jim George, 'Leo Strauss, Neoconservatism and US Foreign Policy': 182

273   Jim George, 'Leo Strauss, Neoconservatism and US Foreign Policy': 182

The above discussion begs for another clarification: the distinction between Foucauldian discourse and myth. In its general common connotation, a myth is a symbolic religious narrative of gods or superhuman beings; by extension, the word can also have a looser sense to refer to an ideological belief which is pursued with quasireligious faith.[274] It is apparent that the latter is the usage that Strauss was making of the word, which contrasts with the wider implications of discourse as the rules of formation that determine what becomes 'truth'. Like ideologies, myths are particular manifestations of discourse, and as such are both instruments and objects of power.[275]

3.2.2 *The analytical and ethical relevance of lies for the discourse of the war on terrorism*

That a network of power engages in misrepresentation of facts, creation of myths and the use of lies (whether crude or 'noble') is not something foreseen as part of the process of the production of a discourse within Foucauldian thought. Foucault was not interested in either the truth of statements or their meaning, but rather in the rules of formation that determine the objects, concepts, operations and options of a particular discourse.[276] While Foucault was likely aware of deceit and lying as factors in political power in its form of domination, if we remain within the limits of his proposed method we find no place for a discussion of lies and their role in discourse. But we cannot ignore them as historical

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274   *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Macropedia, Knowledge in Depth*, (15th Edition, 2002, Volume 24): 715

275   An interesting avenue of reflection on possible further implications of myth for ideology and discourse may be provided by the work of Roland Barthes, who contended that myth in a bourgeois society is "depoliticized speech". By 'political', Barthes meant the whole of human relations in their real social structure and "power of making the world". Thus, the function of the myth is to rid things of the contingent and historical and make them innocent while providing a natural and eternal justification. Roland Barthes, 'Myth Today', in John Storey (ed.), *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader*, (UK: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2006): 301

276   Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1986 [1982]: 49-50, quoted in Jacob Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe and Zizek* (UK: Blackwell, 1999): 90

elements in the production of the discourse of the war on terrorism; as well as the possible influence of Strauss' notion of the 'noble lie'. The subject of lies suggests itself repeatedly while searching for the specificities of the discourse, thus stressing again the importance of agency, plus the disproportionality of the discourse in relation to facts. These are points that I argue in more detail in chapter 3.

Furthermore, there is an ethico-political implication of stressing the appearance of lies. Even in Foucault there is a personal ethics of agency and refusal concerning everyday matters and mundane governing practices; a possibility of freedom on an individual level by changing the way we think of ourselves and our lives. Foucault said that he was more interested in "politics as an ethics" than politics itself. Following Foucault, one may be more suspicious about more things, but one also has more opportunities to practice freedom, to exercise one's inventiveness, to assert possibilities and, therefore, to change oneself.[277] His norms are expressed in a desire to challenge possible abuses of power; any form of government "must be subject to analysis and critique based on a will not to be dominated, voicing concerns in public and withholding consent about anything that appears to be unacceptable."[278] It is clear then that repeatedly pointing out the instances in which the abuse of power takes place through the intentional use of lies would fulfil a Foucauldian ethic. Perhaps Foucault never considered this strategy as a form of resistance to domination, but the repeating practice of lying within the context of the war on terror requires it.

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277   Frank Pignatelli, 'Dangers, Possibilites: Ethico-Political Choices in the Work of Michel Foucault', *Philosophy of Education*, 1993

278   Bent Flyvbjerg, 'Habermas and Foucault: thinkers for civil society?'

3.3 Neoconservatism in Historical Perspective

Earlier in this chapter I have argued that the network of power is neither monolithic nor well defined; that it does not have a permanent hold of power and it suffers transformations as its members occupy different positions throughout time; and that in this sense power functions within the network like a currency exchanging hands without stability or guarantee – a point of view that somehow resembles Foucault's notion of capillary power, with the difference that here I am referring to a specific political elite. By reviewing the history of neoconservatism I intend to show that the power of this network has indeed fluctuated and has been marked by discontinuities as a result of historical contingency.

A second objective for the narrative that follows is to highlight again the ideas that have made echo in the discourse of the war on terrorism, thus stressing the role of agency of a network of power capable of intervening in the production of the discourse, even if only partially.

Finally, by describing the groups that compose the network – groups identified as part of neoconservatism, the Bush administration, the Israel lobby or Christian conservatives – and their connections, I hope to show how their ideas resonate with each other.

3.3.1 *Origins*

Social and political difficulties forced some liberal intellectuals to reconsider their positions by rejecting what they considered to be excesses of radicalism and hubris from reformists. This resulted in a split in US liberalism at the beginning of the 1970s. The parting intellectuals confounded their colleagues on the left who accused them of turning to the right, and at first were called "new

conservatives", changing later into "neoconservatives". [279]

The break came in large part because they saw a threat in mounting social disorders and what they thought of as wishful thinking in foreign affairs, isolating themselves within the Democratic Party. Most of the New York liberal community was Jewish, and so they were also disturbed by what they saw as a sharp increase in anti-Semitism from the black community – even when hard evidence to back up this claim was scarce. They also believed that criticism from the New Left of the 1967 war Israeli victory and accusations of oppression of Arabs were another form of anti-Semitism.[280]

The leading neoconservatives – Irving Kristol, Norman Podhoretz, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, and Nathan Glazer, Daniel Bell, Midge Decter, Michael Novak, Gertrude Himmelfarb, Peter Berger and others – were veterans of the so-called vital centre of anti-Communist ideology. They rejected détente as a failure to stand against the evils of communism,[281] argued that the defeat in Vietnam had led the Democratic party to go soft on national security, and endorsed Ronald Reagan because he promised to renew efforts in the struggle with the Soviets. [282]

3.3.2 *The Committee on the Present Danger and Team B*

In March 1976, Republican and Democratic hardliners established the Committee on the Present

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279   John Ehrman, *The Rise of Neoconservatism*: 33, 34; and Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 41, 56

280   John Ehrman, *The Rise of Neoconservatism*: 34-46

281   John Ehrman, *The Rise of Neoconservatism*: 33, 34; and Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 41, 56

282   John Samples, 'The Rise and Fall of conservative Reform in the United States': 99, 100

Danger (CPD). It was led by Richard Allen, William Casey, Max Kampelman, Paul Nitze, Richard Perle, Norman Podhoretz, Eugene Rostow, and Elmo Zumwalt, and it included Paul Wolfowitz, Donald Rumsfeld, Kenneth Adelman and Richard Pipes. It supported the Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson and Ronald Reagan warning that coexistence with the Soviet Union as promoted by Henry Kissinger had dangerously turned the US into a weaker power than the Soviet Union. Its purpose was to destroy détente and the Jimmy Carter administration, and 'sell' the Soviet threat scenario as presented by Team B, an alternative hard-line group of outside experts to the CIA appointed that year by the agency's new director, George H. W. Bush.

The thesis of both CPD and Team B was that the US must reject all 'appeasement' strategies, abandon arms control and engage in military build up to overwhelm all threats in any foreseeable future.[283]

Team B consisted of three groups: one analyzed Soviet low-altitude air defence capabilities, another studied Soviet ICBM accuracy, and the last one focused on Soviet strategic objectives. It was the last one, chaired by Pipes and including Wolfowitz as one of its members, which triggered controversy, earning the name Team B exclusively. This group believed that the Soviets had built their forces to fight and win a nuclear war – not to deter one – by gaining a strategic superiority that would deny the US any effective retaliatory options. This was the chief argument in their report, issued a month after Carter won the presidency; an argument that was promulgated as a factual imperative by the CPD.[284]

Notice that the belief in the USSR preparing for nuclear war instead of deterrence, as well as the name

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283   Gary Dorrien, *Imperial Designs*: 50; Jim George, 'Leo Strauss, Neoconservatism and US Foreign Policy': 186 ; and James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*: 73, 74

284   Gary Dorrien, *Imperial Designs*: 50-53

of the committee itself, have been reproduced in the theme of the discourse of the war on terrorism about an era of unprecedented danger.

3.3.3 *The Reagan Administration*

A sign of how much Ronald Reagan valued the work of the Committee on the Present Danger was the fact that no less than thirty of its members received appointments to his administration in 1980, twenty of them in national security posts.[285]

Reagan entered office sharing their belief that previous administrations had neglected the nation's defences and been too passive in the face of Soviet expansionism.[286] Likewise, the neoconservatives believed that they had a president who shared their view of the world, and whose victory proved that US citizens had come to share their views of the present danger.[287]

Jean Kirkpatrick was appointed ambassador to the UN because of her articles published at *Commentary*. Elliott Abrams, Daniel Patrick Moynihan's former assistant, was made assistant secretary of state for international organizations. Richard Perle became assistant secretary of Defence for international security policy, and played one of the most skilful and influential roles among neoconservative policy-makers. Max Kampelman, a member of the Committee on the Present Danger remained head of the American delegation to the Madrid meeting of the Conference on Security and

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285 Jim George, 'Leo Strauss, Neoconservatism and US Foreign Policy': 186

286 David Mervin, *Ronald Reagan & the American Presidency* (London and New York: Longman, 1990): 210

287 John Ehrman, *The Rise of Neoconservatism*: 137, 138

Cooperation in Europe, an appointment he had received from Carter in 1980.[288]

For two years Paul Wolfowitz ran the State Department's policy planning staff in the administration, working out the department's long-term goals. His staff included Francis Fukuyama, Alan Keyes, Zalmay Khalilzad, and James Roche. Later, Wolfowitz became Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs.[289]

Through their declarations, neoconservatives contributed to the initial image of Reagan in the way he was regarded outside the US. They came rapidly to be seen, especially by outsiders, as the foreign policy specialists of Reagan, largely because other members of the right wing were oriented to domestic issues.[290] From her position in the UN, Kirkpatrick consistently supported Israel in the Security Council and the General Assembly against "an ongoing process whose goals are to delegitimize... [Israel and] to deny it the right to self-Defence, to secure borders, to survival." After the invasion of Grenada Kirkpatrick told the Security Council that "the [UN] charter does not require that people submit supinely to terror, nor that their neighbours be indifferent to their terrorization." She applied the argument in other situations. "We do not think it is moral to leave small countries and helpless people defenceless against conquest by violent minorities", she said of El Salvador in 1984. Following Kirkpatrick's lead, Abrams portrayed Communism as the greatest threat to human rights.[291] From their point of view for reasons of *Soviet* structure and politics, the conflict between Moscow and Washington was not susceptible of mitigation, but had to end with the death or transformation of one or

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288   John Ehrman, *The Rise of Neoconservatism*: 149; Coral Bell, The Reagan Paradox: 9; and Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 57

289   Gary Dorrien, *Imperial Designs*: 58

290   Coral Bell, *The Reagan Paradox*: 9

291   John Ehrman, *The Rise of Neoconservatism*: 149-157

other of the two countries.[292]

For the first three years the declarations coming from Reagan were what the neoconservatives would have wished. Reagan asserted that Soviet leaders were masters of an "evil empire" prepared "to commit any crime, to lie, to cheat" in order to achieve a Communist world. In a display of Anti-Communism, Reagan rejected détente and claimed that an expansionist USSR "underlies all the unrest that is going on. If they weren't engaged in this game of dominoes, there wouldn't be any hot spots in the world." He identified the Soviets as the source of Third World disorders and he committed the US to the active support of anti-Communist movements around the world, such as the contras in Nicaragua and the Afghan rebels.[293] However, Reagan's declarations disguised the fact that his actions did not match his words. This may explain in part why differences between some neoconservatives and Reagan developed in the later years.[294]

The reason for the gap between words and actions is most probably that anti-Communism and threat exaggeration serve as vehicles for forging US unity at home – and identity – particularly in times of domestic crisis. Thomas G. Patterson notes that

> Given these characteristics [of creation of unity], leaders who have developed views of a malevolent Communism that preys upon a vulnerable world may not shift their views, even in the face of abundant evidence that Communism is not the omnipresent force they imagine. Because leaders work to maintain consistency in their ideas, they will often ignore

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292   Coral Bell, *The Reagan Paradox*: 13

293   Thomas G. Paterson, *Meeting the Communist Threat: Truman to Reagan* (New York and Oxford: Oxford, 1988): 256

294   Coral Bell, *The Reagan Paradox*: 16

contradictions, cling to exaggerations, and become intransigent.[295]

What is interesting about this observation is the parallel that may be drawn with today's neoconservative exaggerations of the threat of global terrorism; other commentators, like John Samples, have already noticed the similarities.[296] Both 'wars' also remind us of Strauss's idea of the creation of myths to encourage social unity and purpose.

Neoconservatives who were unhappy with Reagan, such as Norman Podhoretz, Frank Gaffney, and Michael Ledeen outflanked him to the right. From the early years of Reagan's presidency Podhoretz bitterly complained that Reagan, despite his rhetoric, huge military expenditures, and appointment of neoconservatives, capitulated to the Soviets.[297] He became progressively more disillusioned as he realized that Reagan was not consumed with defeating Communism but instead was acting cautiously. In Podhoretz's view, anything less than total victory was equivalent to defeat and he bitterly denounced Reagan for his compromises.[298] In 1981 Irving Kristol complained that no new, stronger measures had taken the place of the grain embargo imposed on the USSR after the invasion of Afghanistan; he worried that the administration's declared commitment to preventing a leftist revolution in El Salvador was not being matched by actions; and that arms sales to Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, respectively, were not helping the Afghans and were a threat to Israel.

Other neoconservatives resisted the attacks, relieving Reagan of responsibility and blaming a series of

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295   Thomas G. Paterson, *Meeting the Communist Threat*: xi

296   John Samples, 'The Rise and Fall of conservative Reform in the United States': 101, 102

297   Gary Dorrien, *Imperial Designs*: 10, 11

298   John Ehrman, *The Rise of Neoconservatism*: 138

his officials for the shortcomings.[299] In spite of Podhoretz and others, most neoconservatives retain an admiration of Reagan nowadays, considering him the exemplar of all the virtues they defend.[300] The Reagan legacy is clearly present in the outgoing Bush administration. Dick Cheney has said that "it was the vision and the will of Ronald Reagan that gave hope to the oppressed, shamed the oppressors and ended an evil empire,"[301] while Edwin Feulner, president of the far-right Heritage Foundation happily described the Bush Jr. administration as "more Reaganite than the Reagan administration".[302]

Ikenberry writes:

> New fundamentalists are inspired by a particular view of how the Cold War was won – and it is their lessons from their great victory that guide their strategy today. It was not engagement, détente, 'paper' agreements and mutual interest that brought the Soviet Union down, but the Reagan administration's hard-line policy of confrontation, military build up and ideological warfare. Reagan raised the stakes in the struggle with the Soviet Union by boosting military spending and putting ideological pressure on the 'evil empire'. This [flawed] historical narrative provides the ultimate defence for hard-line fundamentalist policies.[303]

After their overall successes with Reagan, neoconservatives also began a generational transition from liberalism to mainstream conservatism, while maintaining an identity apart from that traditional

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299   Gary Dorrien, *Imperial Designs*: 12

300   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 11

301   Cited in John Samples, *The Rise and Fall of conservative Reform in the United States*: 97

302   Joel D. Aberbach, 'The Political Significance of the George W. Bush Administration', *Social Policy & Administration*, 39-2 (April 2005): 135

303   G. John Ikenberry, 'The End of the Neo-Conservative Moment': 16, 17

southern and midwestern US conservatism. Younger neoconservatives and analysts like Abrams, William Kristol and Charles Krauthammer began to assume the leadership positions long held by Irving Kristol, Podhoretz, and Kirkpatrick.[304] The second generation of neoconservatives, which also included Alan Keys, Francis Fukuyama, Gary Schmitt, Abram Shulsky and Wolfowitz, was much more explicitly indebted to Strauss.[305]

3.3.4 *The Bush Sr. Administration and the First Gulf War*

After serving as vice president with Reagan, George H. W. Bush became president himself. Various members of his staff would later serve again under his son's administration in 2000. Colin Powell, for example, was chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff with Bush Sr. while Dick Cheney was secretary of Defence.[306] The latter was the only hardline cold warrior in the administration's top rank. While most of his colleagues believed in Gorbachev, Cheney thought that the Soviet Union was still a mortal enemy and that *glasnost* was a trick to disarm the US. He cultivated a team of hardliners in the Pentagon's policy directorate, led by Paul Wolfowitz.

Powell, the former national security advisor with Reagan, was committed no less than Cheney to maintaining and strengthening America's global military dominance. However, unlike Cheney, he believed that the Cold War was over, and wanted the American military to have maximum flexibility in order to focus on regional trouble spots. For him, the US had to be "the world's global police force."

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304   John Ehrman, *The Rise of Neoconservatism*: 173, 174, 185

305   Jim George, 'Leo Strauss, Neoconservatism and US Foreign Policy': 185

306   Larry Berman and Bruce W. Jentleson, 'Bush and the Post-Cold-War World: New Challenges for American Leadership', in Colin Campbell, S.J. and Bert A. Rockman (eds.), *The Bush Presidency: First Appraisals* (N.J.: Chatham House Publishers, c1991.): 102

Part of his plan included military expenditure cuts. While Cheney and Wolfowitz did not agree with Powell on the reduction in military spending, the three of them designed a military policy based on responding to regional contingencies instead of a global war with the Soviet Union. However, the presentation of the new policy coincided with Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, pushing the plan to the background.[307]

The Bush administration had pushed a resolution through the UN Security Council setting a 15 January 1991 deadline for Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait and authorizing any member state to use "all necessary means" after the date. Bush claimed that with the UN resolution in hand and on the basis of his constitutional authority he could go to war after the deadline without a formal declaration of war by the Congress, and so the first attacks on Baghdad came on January 16.

During the six months of US deployments in the Gulf, several different justifications were given by the administration at different points; among them, getting rid of "a mad dictator", defending the "oil-lifeline threatened"; the protection of freedom, liberty, national security, and jobs; the restoration of "rulers to Kuwait", and defence against Saddam Hussein's "nuclear threat".[308] The justifications given by the son for the Second Gulf War echo the father's. Just as Bush Jr.'s discourse spoke of the war within the context of a global war, i.e. the war on terrorism, Bush Sr.'s had also a vision for the world. It was with the First Gulf War that Bush Sr. began to speak of a "new world order":

> What is at stake is more than one small country, it is a big idea – a new world order where
> diverse nations are drawn together in common cause to achieve the universal aspirations of

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307   Gary Dorrien, *Imperial Designs*, p. 28-30
308   Larry Berman and Bruce W. Jentleson, 'Bush and the Post-Cold-War World': 106, 107, 116, 117

mankind: peace and security, freedom and the rule of law.[309]

And:

> [The war was waged] to defend civilized values around the world... a world where the rule of law supplants the rule of the jungle... I've had a lot of time to think about the situation in the Middle East, I've reconciled all the moral issues. It's black versus white, good versus evil.

In another speech he added a religious dimension by declaring that the Gulf War coalition was "on the side of God".[310] Likewise, the language of the discourse of the war on terrorism is often loaded with religious connotations and portrays the situation in 'black and white' terms. Recall Bush Jr.'s declaration in the sense that every nation had to choose to be either with the terrorists or with the US.[311]

Charles Krauthammer took the US led response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait as a reminder that Western security still depended on Washington's lead. "Where the United States does not tread, the alliance does not follow," he wrote. He estimated that a new and major problem would be that advanced weapons technologies would enable "relatively small, peripheral, and backward states... to emerge rapidly as threats not only to regional but to world security," so the US would have to be prepared "to act alone [against these threats], backed by as many of its allies as will join". Similarly, Elliott Abrams advocated a US role centred on using its preponderance of power to enforce

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309   Larry Berman and Bruce W. Jentleson, 'Bush and the Post-Cold-War World': 94

310   Larry Berman and Bruce W. Jentleson, 'Bush and the Post-Cold-War World': 98, 99

311   'You are either with us or against us', *CNN*, (http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/11/06/gen.attack.on.terror/, November 6, 2001)

international norms of conduct, much as Great Britain's during the nineteenth century.[312]

Norman Podhoretz welcomed the Gulf War as an opportunity for the US to 'remoralize' itself after the demise of the Soviet Union and the loss of a necessary 'foreign demon' as a focus of national unity and moral commitment.[313] His concern with morality for the purposes of national strength in the face of an alien threat reminds us again of the political theory of Strauss.

However, Bush's failure to end the war with the removal of Saddam Hussein became a regular complaint in neoconservative publications such as *Commentary*; we get an insight of what they wished for the Middle East a decade before it would materialize.[314] Indeed, it appears that the US invasion of Iraq of 2003, which occurred in the context of the discourse of the war on terrorism, was at least in part motivated by the desire to finally fulfil the objective of removing Hussein from power.

Another cause of neoconservative discontent with the Bush administration was its policies toward Israel. In 1992, the Bush administration demanded from Tel Aviv that a $10 billion in US loan guarantees to Israel not be used in the building of settlements in the occupied territories. Jean Kirkpatrick suggested that this marked a point of departure from traditional US support for Israel. Frustrated by the Israelis as well as their political allies in the US, Secretary of State James A. Baker lost his temper, "Fuck the Jews. They didn't vote for us," he said in a private remark which was leaked to the press. In this atmosphere, some neoconservatives would later find Bill Clinton an attractive

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312   John Ehrman, *The Rise of Neoconservatism*: 182, 183

313   Cited by Dorrien, *The Neoconservative Mind : Politics, Culture and the War of Ideology* (Philadelphia: Tempelton University Press, 1993): 134, cited in Jim George, 'Leo Strauss, Neoconservatism and US Foreign Policy': 183

314   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 81

alternative presidential candidate.[315]

To stress the point again, the continuous examples of unconditional support for Israel suggest that the network of power has unique ideological characteristics which are not necessarily shared by a wider discourse of American identity.

3.3.5 *The 1992 Defence Planning Guidance*

The document that is generally taken to be the basis for the so-called Bush (Jr.) Doctrine guiding the post September 11, 2001 war on terrorism is the *Defence Planning Guidance (DPG)* of 1992, ordered by Secretary of Defence Dick Cheney, supervised by Pentagon Undersecretary for Policy Paul Wolfowitz and prepared by his team. It had the input of I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby, Zalmay Khalilzad, Andrew Marshall, Richard Perle, Eric Edelman and Albert Wohlstetter. The DPG was a military plan for fiscal years 1994 through 1999. It was never officially finalized, but it was leaked to the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*.

The strategy declared the US' right to wage preemptive wars – the word "preempt" was actually included – to avoid attacks with weapons of mass destruction or to punish aggressors. It called for a global missile defence system and a "U.S.-led system for collective security". It opposed the development of nuclear programs in other countries while asserting the US' need to maintain a strong nuclear arsenal. The DPG warned the US might have to take "military steps to prevent the development or use of weapons of mass destruction" in Iraq, North Korea, Pakistan, and India. It warned that

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315   John Ehrman, *The Rise of Neoconservatism*: 196, 197

allowing Japan or South Korea to grow into regional powers would be destabilizing in East Asia, and judged that the US needed to thwart Germany's aspirations for leadership in Europe and restrain India's "hegemonic aspirations" in South Asia. In the Middle East and Southwest Asia, the overall objective was "to remain the predominant outside power in the region and preserve U.S. and Western access to the region's oil." It also cautioned that a Russian relapse was a dangerous possibility.

In short, the US had to become so powerful militarily that no other power or coalition of powers could any longer prevent it shaping the world in its own image.[316]

Since the report was leaked, Bush Sr. and Cheney were forced to distance themselves from it, but it was later published as the *Regional Defence Strategy* of 1993. Its promotion of preemptive military action in Iraq suggests that it became policy in 2002, although Wolfowitz acknowledges that he personally started worrying about Iraq in 1979.[317] Again, the parallels with some of the themes of the discourse of the war on terrorism are evident. Let us not forget that the 2003 Iraq war was to a great extent justified as part of the war on terrorism.

3.3.6 *The Clinton Administration*

During the decade of the 1990s neoconservatism seemed to fade because it was no longer in the administration. Also, it was identified with the bygone debates of the Cold War and it merged to some

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316   Gary Dorrien, *Imperial Designs*: 39, 40; Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*, p. 145; Jim George, 'Leo Strauss, Neoconservatism and US Foreign Policy': 187, 188

317   Jim George, 'Leo Strauss, Neoconservatism and US Foreign Policy': 188; Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 33

degree with mainstream conservatism.[318] This period is an example of the historical contingency to which the neoconservative faction has been subjected.

Though for some neoconservatives Bill Clinton seemed at first a good alternative to Bush, soon his administration became a disappointment, and so they accused him of not being a true moderate Democrat but, rather, a left winger disguising himself to win the election. In foreign affairs, neoconservatives began attacking the president in the spring of 1993, criticizing his apparent acquiescence in the stagnation of multilateralism and his unwillingness to use military force. The Kosovo experience led the neoconservatives to conclude that the NATO alliance was more a hindrance than a help. They focused on Clinton's failure to rescue the Bosnians. His indecision led the neoconservatives to worry that foreign governments might perceive the US as turning isolationist and weakening militarily.[319]

The editors of the *New Republic* were also unhappy with Clinton's softness toward Saddam Hussein: they thought the president had an "obsession" with UN requirements and "legalism". Paul Wolfowitz stressed that the real questions facing US foreign policy were not being addressed, such as future threats from "'backlash states' like North Korea, Iraq and Iran...".[320] Notice the mention of states that would later be labelled as part of the 'axis of evil' that Bush would warn about after September 11, 2001.

With mounting anger Wolfowitz fixated on Iraq in the mid-1990s, fuelling a campaign to rectify the

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318   Gary Dorrien, *Imperial Designs*: 15

319   John Ehrman, *The Rise of Neoconservatism*, p. 203; Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, America Alone: 86, 87, 95

320   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 89

unfinished business. He warned that Saddam was too dangerous to be contained, because with his stockpile of biological weapons "he could kill the entire population of the world". In 1997 Wolfowitz and Khalilzad demanded Saddam's overthrow by the US and its Iraqi allies. They wrote: "If we are serious about dismantling Saddam's weapons of mass destruction, and preventing him from building more, we will have to confront him sooner or later – and sooner would be better."[321]

The disappointment and aspirations of neoconservatism were expressed by William Kristol, who wrote that conservatism

> ought to emphasize both personal and national responsibility, relish the opportunity for national engagement, embrace the possibility of national greatness, and restore a sense of the heroic, which has been sorely lacking in American foreign policy – and American conservatism – in recent years.

The revival of the heroic required a "remoralization of American foreign policy" that recognized that the principles of the Declaration of Independence were "universal, enduring, 'self evident' truths."[322]

3.3.7 *The Project for the New American Century*

William Kristol and Robert Kagan founded the Project for the New American Century (PNAC) in 1997, an indication that neoconservatism had completed a generational transition. Kagan, Kristol, Muravchik, Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, and others had assumed leadership roles that had been held

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321   Gary Dorrien, *Imperial Designs*: 66-68

322   John Samples, 'The Rise and Fall of conservative Reform in the United States': 100

by Nathan Glazer, Irving Kristol, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, and Norman Podhoretz. The terms of their debate shifted replacing the Soviet threat with a broad idea of "American global leadership" and an intent above all else on waging a second Gulf-War.

The members of the PNAC had strong links to the national security bureaucracy, the Defence establishment, the print and cable media industry, dominant sections of the US Defence industry, and some of America's wealthiest conservative foundations. A large portion of the signatories, such as Elliott Abrams, Gary Bauer, Bennett, Dick Cheney, Eliot Cohen, Aaron Friedberg, Frank Gaffney, Fred Ikle, Zalmay Khalilzad, Jean Kirkpatrick, Dan Quayle, Peter Rodman, Henry Rowen, Donald Rumsfeld, and Wolfowitz had served in the Reagan and Bush senior administrations. Others had worked for the CIA, such as Reuel Marc Gerecht and James Woolsey, the agency's director from 1993 to 1995. Among the intellectual members were Francis Fukuyama, Donald Kagan, Podhoretz and Midge Decter. Also in the PNAC were Jeb Bush, brother of the current president, and Perle.

In February 1998 Wolfowitz told the House International Relations Committee that regime change in Iraq was the "only way to rescue the region and the world from the threat that will continue to be posed by Saddam's unrelenting effort to acquire weapons of mass destruction..." That month an open letter was sent to the White House suggesting a strategy for bringing down the Iraqi regime, and another one in May with a similar message was addressed to the Speaker of the House and the Senate Majority Leader.

Among the signatories of the letter to Clinton were Abrams, Richard Armitage, John R. Bolton, Douglas Feith, Khalilzad, Perle, Peter Rodman, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, David Wurmser and Dov Zakheim, Graffney, Kagan, Kristol, Muravchik, Martin Peretz, and Leon Wieseltier. They called

themselves the Committee for Peace and Security in the Gulf.[323] Of the 18 people who signed the PNAC letter to Clinton, eleven became part of the Bush administration.[324] Thus it is natural to expect that the objectives of the PNAC would be reflected in discourses related to the administration.

The PNAC is not the only influential neoconservative organization. The American Enterprise Institute, for example, sits on the three floors above the headquarters of the PNAC in Washington, and has a tradition of extensive associations with the top levels of government. AEI's interaction with government circles has included George H. W. Bush, Gerald Ford, and ex Israeli Prime Minister Yitzak Shamir. Kirkpatrick, Ledeen, Muravchik, Perle Wattenberg, and Wurmser are all members.

In the financial network organizations such as the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, the John M. Olin Foundation, the Sarah Scaife Foundation, the Smith Richardson Foundation and the Castle Rock Foundation all provide the money for research institutions such as AEI, the Heritage Foundation, and the Hoover Institute – the latter includes Rumsfeld and Condoleezza Rice among its alumni, and several of the institute's fellows sit on the Defence Policy Board.[325]

3.3.8 *The Rise of the Bush Jr. Administration and the Bush Doctrine*

When George W. Bush came to power in 2000 an alliance between the two generations of neoconservatives was evident.[326] For weeks, while the 2000 election verdict was being decided between the Florida Supreme Court and the US Supreme Court, the *Weekly Standard* fiercely

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323   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 98-104

324   Gary Dorrien, *Imperial Designs*: 143

325   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 103-105, 108

326   Jim George, 'Leo Strauss, Neoconservatism and US Foreign Policy': 183

contended that Bush should be president. Meanwhile, the neoconservatives got very good appointments, thanks to Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld.[327] John P. Burke reported that planning for the Bush administration commenced a year and a half before a possible inauguration and that the Bush team, particularly Karl Rove, drew on the experiences of the 1980 Reagan transition.[328]

In the Bush administration we find the following individuals: Dick Cheney, Vice President; Lewis Libby, Chief of Staff until his resignation in late 2005; Eric Edelman, Foreign Policy Advisor; Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defence until 2006; Paul Wolfowitz, Assistant Secretary of Defence until his departure and appointment as head of the World Bank; Doug Feith, Under-Secretary of Defence (Policy); Steven Hadley, Deputy to National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice and later Secretary of State replacing Collin Powell; John Bolton, Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and later ambassador to the UN; Richard Perle, Chairman of the Defence Advisory Board, until his resignation in March 2003; Zalmay Khalilizad, special envoy to Afghanistan and Iraq; an Paul Kozemcheak, Defence Department in charge of 'radical innovation' in Defence planning. Others connected to these individuals in the administration include Abram Shulsky, Director of the Pentagon's Office of Special Plans; and Stephen Cambone, Under Secretary of Defence (Intelligence). Both are at the centre of the concern about spurious intelligence to justify the Iraq war.[329]

The 'Bush Doctrine' which emerged after September 11, 2001 resonates with neoconservative perspectives, almost word for word. It is characterized by its support for the use of overwhelming force in the face of threat, even if potential. Pre-emption is an official strategic policy. There is an inclination

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327   Gary Dorrien, *Imperial Designs*: 142

328   Joel D. Aberbach, 'The Political Significance of the George W. Bush Administration': 135

329   Jim George, 'Leo Strauss, Neoconservatism and US Foreign Policy': 191, 192

towards unilateralism, hostile attitudes towards global liberalism and its multilateral institutions, and an ideological representation of US' exceptionalism. The doctrine also includes the idea that this is an opportune time to transform international politics and that peace and stability require the US to assert its primacy in world politics.[330] The National Security Strategy of the US elaborates the doctrine by endorsing the idea of spreading freedom, democracy and free enterprise throughout the world.[331]

It appears that Kagan and Kristol's book, *Present Dangers: Crisis and Opportunity in American Foreign and Defence Policy* of 2000,[332] as well as the 1992 *Defence Planning Guidance* were blueprints of the Bush Doctrine.[333] Since they had been thinking about a strategy for years, the attacks of September 11 found the neoconservatives well prepared, with their response in place and targets fixed.[334]

In the eight months after the terrorist attacks, the already huge US defence budget received a 14 per cent increase,[335] a sign that the military would be having a primary role, confirmed by the wars in Afghanistan and in Iraq. These invasions are but the most visible effects of the Bush Doctrine so far, but the consequences have been profound in many other respects, some of which will be partially covered in further chapters in terms of discourse.

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330   Jim George, 'Leo Strauss, Neoconservatism and US Foreign Policy': 176 ; Robert Jervis, 'Understanding the Bush Doctrine', *Political Science Quarterly*, 118-3 (2003): 365, 366

331   Robert Jervis, 'Understanding the Bush Doctrine': 365, 366

332   Jim George, 'Leo Strauss, Neoconservatism and US Foreign Policy': 190, 191

333   Joel D. Aberbach, 'The Political Significance of the George W. Bush Administration': 144

334   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 33

335   James Anderson, 'American Hegemony after 11 September: Allies, Rivals and Contradictions', *Geopolitics*, 8-3 (October 2003): 39, 40

4. The Israel lobby

What is called the US Israel "lobby" is not just the Jewish community, but also the major segments of liberal opinion, the leadership of the labour unions, religious fundamentalists, conservatives, and cold war warriors[336] which strongly support Israel. John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt define it as

> a convenient short-hand term for the loose coalition of individuals and organizations who actively work to shape U.S. foreign policy in a pro-Israel direction... [While it is not a unified movement with a central leadership, its core] is comprised of American Jews who make a significant effort in their daily lives to bend U.S. foreign policy so that it advances Israel's interests. Their activities go beyond merely voting for candidates who are pro-Israel to include letter-writing, financial contributions, and supporting pro-Israel organizations. But not all Jewish-Americans are part of the Lobby, because Israel is not a salient issue for many of them... Jewish-Americans also differ on specific Israeli policies. Many of the key organizations in the Lobby, like AIPAC and the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations (CPMJO), are run by hardliners who generally supported the expansionist policies of Israel's Likud Party, including its hostility to the Oslo Peace Process. The bulk of U.S. Jewry, on the other hand, is more favorably disposed to making concessions to the Palestinians, and a few groups – such as Jewish Voice for Peace – strongly advocate such steps...[337]

Thus, it should be noted that the Israel lobby is far from encompassing the whole of the Jewish-

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336   Noam Chomsky, *Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel, and the Palestinians* (London: Pluto Press, 1999): 13

337   John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, 'The Israel lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy' (Working Paper), *The John F. Kennedy School of Government*, (March 2006): 14. An edited and reworked version was published in the *London Review of Books*, 28-6 (www.lrb.co.uk, March 23, 2006)

American community. Nor is it a monolithic and clearly defined group. Furthermore, Mearsheimer and Walt observe that many members of the Israel lobby are not Jewish, but Christian evangelicals who believe that the state of Israel plays an important role in Biblical prophecy, and other non-Jews.[338]

The Israel lobby is closely connected to neoconservatism. Though there is no logical reason why neoconservatism should be linked to hardline Zionism, in fact it often is, mingling the neoconservative and Israel lobby networks and making them sometimes indistinguishable from each other. Naturally, both groups resonate with each other in a similar fashion as that described by Connolly, quoted previously in this chapter.[339] Gary Dorrien writes:

> Most unipolarist leaders were Jewish neoconservatives who took for granted that a militantly pro-Israel policy was in America's interest. Wolfowitz, Perle, Podhoretz, Krauthammer, Wattenberg, Muravchik, both Kristols, Kagan, Boot, and Kaplan fit the description, as did dozens of neocons at all levels of the Bush administration from the Pentagon desk officers to State Department deputy secretaries and advisors in the vice president's office.

Some of these were members of the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA), founded in 1976, which took a very hard line against the Palestinians and US diplomatic relations with Syria. According to Dorrien, JINSA has sometimes outflanked Israel's Likud Party to the right.

JINSA's board of advisors before 2001 included Richard Perle, James Woolsey, Dick Cheney, John Bolton, and Douglas Feith, until they moved into the Bush administration. JINSA gave a voice to those

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338   John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, 'The Israel lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy': 15-26
339   William E. Connolly, 'The Evangelical-Capitalist Resonance Machine': 870

who wanted to see the US continue to provide Israel with ample support in case of another war in the Middle East. The Institute is now committed to argue in favour of the link between US National security and Israel's security, as well as strengthening both. Since the 1970s, JINSA has grown to a highly connected and well-funded $1.4-million-a-year operation, much of which goes toward facilitating contact between Israeli officials and retired US generals and admirals with influence in Washington. Indeed, one of the military figures connected to JINSA was Jay Garner, the Bush administration's first choice for the reconstruction of Iraq, and one of the signatories of the US Admirals' and Generals' Statement on Palestinian Violence, which stated: "We are appalled by the Palestinian political and military leadership that teaches children the mechanics of war while filling their heads with hate."[340]

JINSA overlaps considerably with the Centre for Security Policy (CSP), another hardline Zionist organization. Both are underwritten largely by Irving Moskowitz, and their membership lists are interchangeable. The CSP is directed by Frank Gaffney, a Perle protégé, and it promotes wars for regime changes throughout the Middle East while stridently defending Israel's settlements policy.[341]

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), founded in the 1950s and with a 100,000 members across the US, is mostly concerned about ensuring that Israel is strong enough to meet its security challenges. Its website boasts that publications such as *The New York Times* and *Fortune* have described it as one of the most powerful interest groups and the most important organization affecting the US' relationship with Israel. It helps pass more than 100 pro-Israel legislative initiatives through

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340   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 106

341   Gary Dorrien, *Imperial Designs*: 196, 197; Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 105, 106

meetings with members of Congress.[342]

Other institutes lobbying for Israel include the Washington Institute for Near East Policy and the Middle East Forum.[343]

The loyalty of the neoconservative Jews seems to be exclusively related to the Likud Party and the extreme right of Israeli politics[344] – a trait that again highlights the importance of the specificities of the network of power. One of the most outstanding events to come out of this relationship was the 1996 research paper published by the Israeli think tank the Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies, *A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm.* It was a policy guideline for Israeli Prime Minister, Binyamin Netanyahu which argued that Netanyahu's "new set of ideas" provided an opportunity "to make a clean break" with the afflicted Oslo peace process. The paper criticized the "land for peace" initiative and emphasized: "Our claim to the land – to which we have clung for hope for 2000 years – is legitimate and noble." The "clean break" also meant re-establishing "the principle of preemption". The study group that contributed to the report included JINSA member James Colbert, Charles Fairbanks, Feith, Perle, Jr., David Wurmser, and his wife Meyrav Wurmser.[345] The document also called for the use of proxy armies to destabilize and overthrow Arab governments. It advocated Israeli attacks on Syrian military targets in Lebanon, and, if necessary, Syria. Since Iraq was an enemy of Israel, it asked Netanyahu to support Jordanian Hashemites in their challenges to Iraq's borders.

Perle, Feith and Wurmser told Netanyahu, with whom they had close personal ties, that the US would

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342   'About AIPAC', *AIPAC* (http://www.aipac.org/documents/whoweare.html, November 22, 2005)

343   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 108

344   Jim George, 'Leo Strauss, Neoconservatism and US Foreign Policy': 188

345   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 106, 107

support a hard line against the Palestinians and a policy of "hot pursuit into Palestinian-controlled areas." More important, Israel was under no obligation to honour the Oslo agreements if the Palestine Liberation Organization did not fulfil its obligations of compliance and accountability. The time had come to find alternatives to Arafat's and Israel's dependence on the US, they urged.[346]

No doubt that Netanyahu paid good attention to the words of neoconservatives, since shortly after the September 11, 2001 attacks he asked the US to smash Iraq, Iran, Hamas, Hezbollah and the Palestinian resistance. Neoconservatives added Syria, North Korea, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Sudan and Algeria.[347]

Bush's announcement of 14 March 2003 of support for the road map for the peace in Palestine set off the alarms among neoconservatives and the Israeli government. The issue was Bush's degree of seriousness to promote the road map and the State Department's suggestion of the creation of a Palestinian state by 2005. However, on several occasions Bush signalled that he was not serious, suggesting that the plan could be amended later. As for Colin Powell's State Department's critical stance towards the barrier separating Israel from the West Bank, the supporters of Israel won the match. Though Powell complained about Israel's repression on Palestine and Bush asked Ariel Sharon to build the security barrier as close as possible to the Green Line, on October 1, 2003, Sharon resolved to cut deeply into the West Bank to protect the settlements, vowing to retain the major ones while withdrawing from the Gaza Strip. The Bush administration approved the decision and disavowed the Palestinian right of return. Though Sharon claimed to accept the goal of a two-state solution, its policy

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346   Gary Dorrien, *Imperial Designs*: 197

347   Gary Dorrien, *Imperial Designs*: 202

sabotaged the possibility of a viable Palestinian state.[348] This should serve as example of the effects of the work of the Israel lobby, a group with particular goals not necessarily linked to an overall discourse of American identity and security.

4.1 *A note about the Israel-US relationship*

The historical open support of the US towards the state of Israel is widely known and documented. Since 1976, Israel has been the largest annual recipient of direct US economic and military assistance and the largest total recipient since World War II. The total direct US aid to that nation amounts to over $140 billion dollars (in 2003 dollars). Israel receives roughly a fifth of the yearly US foreign aid budget. Among other privileges, Israel is the only recipient of US aid that does not need to account for how the money is spent; it has received nearly $3 billion to develop weapons systems from the US; and enjoys access to intelligence that the US denies NATO allies. Furthermore, since 1982 the US has vetoed 32 UN Security Council resolutions that criticized Israel, a number larger than the combined total of vetoes cast by all the other Security Council members. The US has also blocked Arab states efforts to put Israel's nuclear arsenal on the International Atomic Energy Agency's agenda.[349]

Less well known, because of their covert nature, are the paradoxical cases of espionage between these two countries. One such case is that of Jonathan Jay Pollard, a civilian analyst working for naval intelligence who was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1986 for passing copies of secret documents to Israel. Shimon Peres, back then Israeli Foreign Minister, apologized and said it would not happen again. But the Israeli secret agents who had recruited Pollard and handled his material were

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348   Gary Dorrien, *Imperial Designs*: 208, 209, 212, 214

349   John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, 'The Israeli Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy': 2, 3

promoted.[350]

AIPAC might also be involved in a case of espionage, according to revelations made to the media in August 2004. While working in the office of undersecretary of defence Douglas Feith, Larry Franklin was accused of transmitting information to AIPAC, which then forwarded it to Israel, about the White House's war plans for Iraq.[351] Indeed, Franklin later admitted disclosing classified information related to Iran to a foreign official who was not authorized to receive it. Two former senior AIPAC staffers, Steve Rosen and Keith Weissman, and an official from the Israeli embassy, Naor Gilon, appeared to be the recipients.[352] Franklin was indicted a month later, though the indictment made no mention of the AIPAC members involved, the foreign official, or his nationality.[353]

Likewise, Richard Perle, who functions as a link across many of the neoconservative think tanks, research institutions, and other organizations on the network,[354] was, according to researcher Stephen Green, caught by the FBI in 1970 discussing classified information with an Israeli Embassy official. Wolfowitz was also investigated in 1978 for providing a classified document to an Israeli official via an AIPAC staffer on the proposed sale of a US weapons system to an Arab government.[355]

An interesting source of information about Israeli espionage on the US is the work of ex Mossad officer Victor Ostrovsky, who in 1990 wrote a book describing his experiences in the organisation.

350   Coral Bell, *The Reagan Paradox*: 97

351   Ze'ev Schiff, 'Analysis: Cold wind blowing from the CIA', *Haaretz* (August 2004)

352   Nathan Guttman, 'Franklin admits he disclosed classified information in AIPAC affair', *Haaretz* (May 2005)

353   'Pentagon analyst indicted on charges of divulging classified information', *Agence France Presse* (June 13, 2005)

354   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 105

355   Jim Lobe, 'Spy probe scans neo-cons' Israel ties', *Asia Times*,

(http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/FI02Ak02.html, 2005)

While it is impossible to verify all of his claims, two facts suggest that he is telling a largely true story. The first one is the degree of detail of the accounts and descriptions in his books, which include reproductions of organisational charts and documents (administrative hierarchy, official and actual flow of intelligence, a layout of the Mossad Academy, a Mossad pay sheet, and others). The second is the fact that the Israeli government tried to ban the publication of his first book. According to *The Washington Post*, lawyers for the Israeli government argued that the publication could "endanger the lives of various people in the employ of the state of Israel, and would be detrimental to the government of the state of Israel."[356] Four years later, when Ostrovsky had just published his second book on Mossad, Josef Lapid, the former general manager of the Israeli Broadcasting Corporation and a leading political commentator, requested on Israeli television that Mossad kill Ostrovsky. A few days later Lapid appeared on Canadian television and called for "a decent Jew in Canada" to assassinate him.[357] It was Ostrovsky's loyalty to Israel that was being challenged – not his credibility.

According to Ostrovsky, the CIA is wrong to believe that Mossad does not operate actively in the US itself. The ex agent declares that a secret division of Mossad called *Al* (Hebrew for "above") employs between 24 and 27 veteran field personnel who work mostly within US borders: "Their primary task is to gather information on the Arab world and the PLO, as opposed to gathering intelligence about US activities. But... the dividing line is often blurred, and when in doubt, *Al* doesn't hesitate to cross over it."[358]

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356   'N.Y. Judge Bans Book; Injunction Says Spy Expose' Would Hurt Israel', *The Washington Post* (September 13, 1990)

357   Faisal Kutty, 'Ostrovsky Files Lawsuit Against CTV Network and Others', *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* (http://www.wrmea.com/backissues/0495/9504057.htm, April/May 1995)

358 Victor Ostrovsky & Claire Hoy, *By Way of Deception, The Making and Unmaking of a Mossad Officer*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990): 269

The paradox of a close alliance between the US and Israel tainted by cases of espionage should serve as a reminder that the network of support for Israel within the US – as well as neoconservatism – exists within a context of fluid, complex and unstable power relations, marked by historical contingency and discontinuities. It is not unreasonable to state that cases such as these have the potential to rearrange the configuration of power relations within the network.

5. Other Power Relations

5.1 *Oil Industry*

It is possible to speculate that the the real reasons for the war on Iraq had nothing to do with the threat posed by Saddam Hussein but with the desire to control Middle Eastern oil. If so, it would be logical to assume that economics played a major role. I do not believe, however, that the importance of oil is in itself sufficient to explain the war or any of the other effects of the war on terrorism for the matter. While it should not be ignored, it is just one factor and one part of a larger network of power relations, and not necessarily the one most directly related to the discourse.

The importance that the Bush administration and its neoconservative advisers attribute to Persian Gulf oil can be traced back to 1976, when Paul Wolfowitz, working as the deputy assistant secretary of defence for regional programmes in the Carter administration, wrote the *Limited Contingency Study*, the first extensive examination of the need for the US to defend the Persian Gulf. The document began:

We and our major industrialized allies have a vital and growing stake in the Persian Gulf region

because of our need for Persian Gulf oil and because events in the Persian Gulf affect the Arab-Israeli conflict… The importance of Persian Gulf Oil cannot be easily exaggerated.[359]

If the Soviet Union were to control Persian Gulf oil, Wolfowitz warned, NATO and the US-Japanese alliance would probably be destroyed "without recourse to war by the Soviets".

The study also addressed the possible threat of Iraq to Western interests. The solution:

> we must not only be able to defend the interests of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and ourselves against an Iraqi invasion or show of force, we should also make manifest our capabilities and commitments to balance Iraq's power – and this may require an increased visibility for U.S. power.[360]

The personal careers of some of the members of the Bush administration also suggest that the issue of oil was carefully taken into consideration. The Secretary of Commerce Don Evans is the former chairman of Tom Brown, an independent oil and gas position that exploits natural gas in the Rocky Mountains. Vice President Dick Cheney was chief executive of Halliburton, the world's largest oil field service company, and George W. Bush himself owned a small oil company, Arbusto. That his experience shaped his decisions to some degree is revealed by his own words: "I lived the energy industry. I understand its ups and downs. I also know its strategic importance to the United States of America. Access to energy is a mainstay of our national security".[361]

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359   James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*: 79

360   James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*: 83

361   Richard Wolffe and Stephen Fidler, 'Bush Campaign finds it more comfortable to duck the gasoline price issue',

The assumption that oil was one of the main reasons for war on Iraq is reinforced by *Crude Designs: The rip-off of Iraq's oil wealth*, a 2005 report authored by Greg Muttitt, from the London-based charity *PLATFORM*, and backed by US and British pressure groups such as *War on Want*, the *New Economics Foundation* (NEF), *Global Policy Forum* and *Institute for Policy Studies*. It claimed that Iraq would lose up to $194bn (£113bn) of oil wealth if a US-inspired plan to hand over development of its oil reserves to US and British multinationals would come into force in 2006. The report says the new Iraqi constitution opened the way for greater foreign investment and that negotiations with oil companies, such as the Anglo-Dutch Shell group, were already under way ahead of the December 2005 election and before legislation was passed. The authors claimed to have details of high-level pressure from the US and UK governments on Iraq to look to foreign companies to rebuild its oil industry. The report added that the use of production sharing agreements (PSAs) was proposed by the US State Department even before the invasion and adopted by the Coalition Provisional Authority.

Earlier in 2005 a *BBC Newsnight* report claimed to have uncovered documents showing the Bush administration made plans to secure Iraqi oil even before September 11, 2001.[362]

5.2 *Christian Conservative Groups*

Since the discourse of neoconservatism portrays world politics as a struggle of good versus evil, an image that grew with the events of September 11, 2001, it found support and common ground among

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Financial Times (June 23, 2000)

362   Philip Thornton, 'Iraq's Oil: The Spoils of War', *The Independent*, (http://news.independent.co.uk/world/middle_east/article328526.ece, 22 November 2005); and 'Big Oil has crude designs on Iraq wealth – report', Reuters, (http://today.reuters.co.uk/news/newsArticle.aspx?type=businessNews&storyID=2005-11-22T055019Z_01_YUE220804_RTRUKOC_0_UK-ENERGY-IRAQ-REPORT.xml, November 22, 2005)

domestic Christian conservative groups. Commentators such as Jerry Falwell and Christian Broadcasting Network President Pat Robertson offered similarly apocalyptic accounts of events.[363] This does not mean that neoconservatives actually share their beliefs, but that there is a great degree of resonance.

Some of these Christian conservatives also share a world-view marked by overwhelming threats that need to be confronted. An example of their thinking is offered by Robertson's comments of August 2005 on Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez. Chavez, he said, was a "terrific danger" to the US because he would make Venezuela a "launching pad for communist infiltration and Muslim extremism." His solution:

> You know, I don't know about this doctrine of assassination, but if he thinks we're trying to assassinate him, I think that we really ought to go ahead and do it. … It's a whole lot cheaper than starting a war ... and I don't think any oil shipments will stop. …We have the ability to take him out, and I think the time has come that we exercise that ability. …We don't need another $200 billion war to get rid of one, you know, strong-arm dictator... It's a whole lot easier to have some of the covert operatives do the job and then get it over with.[364]

In another instance of resonance, Robertson has supported the Israeli settlements movement and denounced peace negotiations with the Palestinians. The basis for his position is the Bible's geography of the promised land and, mostly, the belief according to which the gathering of Jews in modern Israel

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363   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 196

364   'Televangelist calls for Chavez' death', *Associated Press*,

(http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2005/08/22/televangelist_calls_for_chavez_death?mode=PF, August 22, 2005)

was a prelude to Christ's second coming at which Jews would be converted to Christianity or condemned to hell.[365]

This interpretation of the significance of the state of Israel as the site for the second coming of Christ is shared by Christian right groups such as *Empower America*, founded by PNAC co-signatory William Bennett and Jack Kemp in 1999, and the *Foundation for the Defence of Democracy* (FDOD), resulting in their support to the neoconservative agenda and Israel's Likud Party. Ralph Reed joined together with Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein to found *Stand for Israel*, with the purpose of generating political support among the Christian community for Israel and later the war on terrorism. The group was created out of the *International Fellowship of Christians and Jews* (IFCJ), which has been central in the promotion of the relationship between evangelical Christians and US Jews since 1983.

In return, neoconservative figures such as National Security Council official Elliott Abrams, also helped to promote the links between Washington's neoconservatives and Christian evangelicals, sometimes advocating for issues of importance to religious groups such as sex trafficking and AIDS.[366] Furthermore, the goal of George W. Bush's Faith-Based Initiative is to enable partnerships between faith-based organizations and the government in the delivery of social services, making them eligible to compete for grants. Once with federal funding, they would be able to consider a person's religion when hiring staff, which constitutes discrimination in hiring on the basis of religion, and to use federal funds build or maintain structures that could be used for religious purposes. Not all of Congress would pass Bush's legislation, so the President used executive orders and rule changes to get what he wanted for

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365   Gary Dorrien, *Imperial Designs*: 205

366   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 109, 198, 199

the benefit of his religious supporters.[367]

The agenda of the Christian right has also a place in the Republican Party. In the March 2004 Texas conventions the delegates agreed, among other things, to the idea that homosexuality should be repealed, that Israel has an undivided claim to Jerusalem and the West Bank and should do whatever it wishes in order to eliminate terrorism. Arab states, on the other hand, should be "pressured" to absorb refugees from Palestine.[368]

A survey conducted after September 11, 2001 shows how closely linked are the ideas of the Christian right to the war on terrorism. When asked to name the most important reasons for the support of Israel, 56 percent of evangelical Christians referred to its alliance with the US against terrorism. Even neoconservative Daniel Pipes recognized as much in July 2003: "To those who wonder why Washington follows policies so different from the European states, a large part of the answer these days has to do with the clout of Christian Zionists."[369] Another poll from April 2004 discovered that among US citizens who go to church at least once a week, 56% agreed that the "situation in Iraq was worth going to war over." Less than 45% of those who seldom attend church thought so. Consider the political importance of these relationships in the light that at least one in five US citizens identify themselves as Evangelicals.[370]

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367   Joel D. Aberbach, 'The Political Significance of the George W. Bush Administration': 142, 143

368   George Monbiot, 'Their beliefs are bonkers, but they are at the heart of power', *The Guardian*, (http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,3604,1195568,00.html, April 20, 2004)

369   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 199

370   John Samples, 'The Rise and Fall of conservative Reform in the United States': 101

6. Conclusions

The description of the power relations behind the current US discourse on terrorism shows that the most influential group has been the neoconservatives. Their ideas and goals – already established many years before 2001 – find in the themes of the discourse (to be discussed in chapter 3) a complement, an updated purpose and an extension. This group of power-holders is also privileged for linking the Israel lobby – with which they often overlap – to the outgoing US administration, and certain sectors of academia, industry and religion. This is not to say that the discourse has been exclusively masterminded by neoconservatives. Rather, since 2001 and up to this point they have been at the centre of the resonating elite network of societies of discourse and doctrines from which the discourse has emerged. As this is a fluctuating network rather than a rigid structure, it is possible that the range of their influence may change or be diminished due to historical contingency. It follows that the discourse must be understood in similar terms: as a set of variable discontinuities over which no single group has entire control.

While the network of power is immersed and inserted within Foucauldian historical categories – such as overarching discourses of American identity and security – this chapter has shown that the network can be reasonably traced to specific names of people and institutions which articulate the discourse of the war on terrorism in a unique way. Without an empirical description, its most basic elements – some of which constitute discontinuities of the war on terrorism in regards to larger discourses predominant within American society – would be missed. Some of these elements play a role in recreating the discourse, or manifesting it as the discourse that it is today, in ways that do not appear to have been foreseen by Foucault, such as the use lies, the practice of lobbying, the still important category of an economically privileged class with specific interests (e.g. oil), or religion as an element which

strengthens geopolitical alliances (Israel – US).

The two key points where a Foucauldian approach reveals limitations in the analysis presented above are: the reluctance to analyse elite groups and their historical specificities (as a result of having 'cut the king's head off'); and the apparent irrelevance of agency if the idea of the inescapability of discourse is interpreted as a structural quality.

Other elements of the analysis presented above do fit with a Foucauldian approach, such as the identification of institutions of an academic or intellectual character as elements of power and discourse; the unstable and historically contingent character of power; and the notions of societies of discourse and doctrines.

The chapter that follows complements this one by presenting further objections to a Foucauldian approach, this time in regards to the notions of discourse, knowledge and truth; and by analyzing the themes articulated in the discourse of the war on terrorism, further establishing the link with the network of power and its capability to shape the discourse in particular ways.

Chapter 3

'Truth' Produced, Facts and The Text of the Discourse on Terrorism

Once the network of power relations has been examined we have a better chance of properly understanding the elements of the discourse on terrorism that it contributes to produce. This chapter focuses on power producing discourse, pleasures, domains of objects, rituals of 'truth', 'knowledge' and 'reality', as Foucault would put it,[371] by detecting the themes produced through texts. In doing so through the case study at hand, it also argues that the discourse analysis would not be complete without what we can learn by retaining a basic sense of the objectivity of facts and events. This is a departure from Foucauldian tradition, which does not consider any sort of objective truth as a requirement for discourse analysis. Quite the contrary, a Foucauldian analysis would not be mainly concerned with "the ensemble of truths which are to be discovered and accepted", but rather with "the ensemble of rules" that distinguish true from false.[372] Foucault and those writing after him would argue that anything we can learn from objects in the world is always constructed through interpretation and discourse, which are in turn determined by social and historical conditions, particularly those related to identity. It is the meaning we give to things and the rules that determine the meaning, and not things themselves, which matter from a Foucauldian perspective. It is true that meaning and interpretation have a central importance for our understanding of a discourse, but I believe that there is value in contrasting

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371   Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972-1977* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980): 119; Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London: Penguin Books, 1977): 194

372   Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*: 132

statements of the discourse with elemental facts, as I will try to show below.

The chapter also deals with the themes as they are produced through some of its *practices*. If we limited our analysis strictly to words, we would lack the awareness of the presence of the network of power producing it and by missing the material manifestations we would lose a portion of the message. The discourse would have a different meaning, i.e. only the one that is being openly stated. Considering practices as part of the discourse is yet another departure from Foucault, who maintained a distinction between the discursive and the non-discursive. In that sense, this analysis places itself closer to Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. This is not to say that Foucault did not see a relation between the discursive and the non-discursive. For Foucault, the rules of formation of a medical discourse, for example, had to be articulated with its non-discursive historical conditions: political events, economic phenomena, and institutional changes that are not discursive; "[h]owever, the relation between the discursive and the non-discursive is neither one of determination nor one of expression" for him. In contrast, Laclau and Mouffe insist on the interweaving of the semantic aspects of language with the pragmatic aspects of actions, movements and objects.[373]

Rather than offering an exhaustive account of the spoken and written language used by US authorities and their ideological supporters, I seek to identify the major themes, objects, concepts,[374] as well as some of the pragmatic aspects that surround them. The nature of the themes and objects would not be complete without a final section of this chapter dealing with the *principles of exclusion* as proposed by

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[373] Jacob Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe and Zizek* (UK: Blackwell, 1999): 90, 91, 94. The issue of practices and material manifestations as part of the message is explored in more detail in chapter 5 through the concepts of biopolitics and Agamben's ability of the sovereign to render bare life.

[374] Dupont, Danica, and Pearce, Frank, 'Foucault contra Foucault: Rereading the 'Governmentality' papers', *Theoretical Criminology*, 5-2 (2001): 145, 146

Foucault that reinforce the discourse.

The reader will see that the themes and objects that spring from the text are dynamically linked and implicit to each other. For that reason the division of themes presented below is an abstraction and not the only possible one. Still, it serves its purpose, namely organizing the message in themes and objects to understand it better. We should also keep in mind that there is not one speaker, but many, and while the words of some carry more weight, depending on their position of power, the chorus of lesser commentators should not be ignored, since they contribute essential elements to the overall message.

Before presenting the specific elements of the discourse we need to examine the production of the notion of *terrorism* on which it is founded. I begin with this issue as my argument follows Foucault in a non-problematic way in regards to it, and it helps to clarify how his views would apply to the case in hand.

1. The Production of Terrorism as a Discursive Object

From a Foucauldian perspective concepts such as *delinquency*, *madness* or *terrorism* do not have an essential existence; they are discursively produced, and legal and political systems make use of them in the context of power.[375] 'Real' or 'essentialist' definitions[376] of terrorism would be motivated by a *will to power* under the guise of a *will to truth*. Foucault's "deepest truth" is that things "have no essence", because "underneath it all everything is already interpretation".[377] This is not to say that there are no objects in the world. As I have noted in chapter 1, a common misunderstanding regarding the nature of

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375   Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*: 280-282

376   Richard Robinson, *Definition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950)

377   Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, (London: Tavistock Publications, 1972): 45

discourse is that the construction of every object as an object of discourse involves dispensing "with the realist claim concerning the existence of a world external of thought... For example, a stone can be discursively constructed as a projectile or as an object of aesthetic contemplation, but it is still the same physical object."[378]

While it may be philosophically argued that at least some concepts do have an essence, this is not the case for value laden concepts which are easily used as instruments of power. Rather than being used to describe objective phenomena, terrorism "is a word with intrinsically negative connotations that is generally applied to one's enemies and opponents, or to those with whom one disagrees and would otherwise prefer to ignore… Use of the term implies moral judgement".[379] That is why, to a considerable extent, it has been a term of propaganda, and not description.[380]

Further proof that we are dealing with interpretations in this case is the fact that there are over a 100 different scholarly definitions of the term, some which exclude or contradict each other.[381] The word was originally used by Edmund Burke in 1790 in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* to refer to the revolutionary French democratic movements.[382] The irony of the term being created to condemn an ideology that is today often considered as its opposite should be enough to prevent us from ascribing an essence to it. Tracking a concept through its epochal variations is what Foucault proposed as the practice of genealogy; in this case, we learn from this genealogical observation that the idea of

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378   Jacob Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse*: 94

379   Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, (London: Victor Gollancz): 31

380   Noam Chomsky, *Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel, and the Palestinians*, (London: Pluto Press, 1999): 101

381   Alex P. Schmid and Albert J. Jongman, et al, *Political Terrorism*, (Amsterdam: SWIDOC, 1984)

382   Annamarie Oliverio, *The State of Terror*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998): 28

'terrorism' was linked to a threat to the *status quo* from its creation, a link which survives today to a great extent, as we will see below.

Any essentialist definition will be almost arbitrary; only determined by a *will to power* or a resistance to it. For a proper understanding of the current US discourse on terrorism we need to determine which is the implicit definition of the concept upon which it has been founded. A brief examination of the two major sets of definitions of terrorism, *tactical definitions* or *political status definitions*, follows. Tactical definitions are so because the determining elements are the characteristics of the mode of violence and its targets; political status definitions are focused on the perpetrators, their illegality and position towards the *status quo*.

1.1 *Tactical definitions*

C. A. J. Coady offers a tactical definition of terrorism as "[t]he organised use of violence to attack non-combatants ("innocents" in a special sense) or their property for political purposes". In this "special sense" the quality that makes a person "innocent" is the principle of non-combatant immunity that has been commonly invoked by just war thinkers.[383]

Under the same light, Igor Primoratz defines terrorism "as the deliberate use of violence, or the threat of its use, against innocent people, with the aim of intimidating some other people into a course of action they would otherwise not take." Equally, he describes the innocent as "persons who are neither members of the armed forces or security services, nor persons who supply these with ammunition, nor

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383   C. A. J. Coady, 'Terrorism and Innocence', *The Journal of Ethics*, 8 (2004): 39. For a discussion on the complexities of non-combatant immunity and terrorism, see p. 42-58

political officials involved in the conflict".[384]

The first consequence of accepting any of these tactical definitions is that states and authorities can be guilty of terrorism: "States can and do use the tactic of attacking the innocent". In the same way, not all anti-state political violence need be terrorist.[385] The definition also comprises revolutionary and counterrevolutionary terrorism, as well as terrorism of the left and of the right. It is politically neutral.[386]

Another important consequence is that it "captures the elements of terrorism that cause many of us to view [terrorism] with utmost moral repugnance", which are violence against the innocent and, under Primoratz's view, the purpose of intimidation and coercion.[387] Here, some may argue against Primoratz that a definition should not carry any negative (nor positive) connotations for the sake of scientific objectivity and neutrality. This may be true for essentialist definitions and under the philosophical assumption that the world independent from the observer is devoid of value. However, in the case of terrorism we are dealing with a recently constructed concept that has been used, since the time of its creation in the late eighteenth century, for the purpose of condemning certain forms of political violence. We cannot hope to rid the term of its negative connotation simply by stating so and ignoring that in the social and political world "on one point, at least, everybody agrees: terrorism is a pejorative term".[388] In fact, ridding the word of its negative connotation may be read as a further indication of an attempt of covering a *will to power* under a pretence of objectivity and neutrality.

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384   Igor Primoratz, 'The Morality of Terrorism', *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 14-3 (1997): 221
385   C. A. J. Coady, 'Terrorism and Innocence': 40
386   Igor Primoratz, 'The Morality of Terrorism': 221
387   Igor Primoratz, 'The Morality of Terrorism': 221, 222
388   Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*: 31

Still, both Coady and Primoratz reveal their aspiration towards neutrality in a case in which it has no place by insisting that the immorality of terrorism is not built into its definition[389], not making the moral condemnation of terrorism analytically true, nor its moral defence analytically false.[390] These remarks are difficult to defend, since we would find ourselves hard pressed to find a convincing argument in defence of the killing of the innocent as morally right. Take, for example, Leon Trotsky's apology for terrorism. From his consequentialist argument terrorism is not morally wrong in itself; it depends on the consequences it is going to have in the circumstances given.[391] For Trotsky, in the revolutionary struggle all means are justified if they are efficient and not too costly. But as Primoratz counter-argues, terrorism "is always an attack on *illegitimate* targets, on *innocent* people… therefore morally impermissible even when employed by a side that otherwise wages a war, or a revolution, which is morally justified in terms of its character and goals".[392] Given his argument, it remains unexplained that this author and Coady insist on the moral neutrality of their definition. What these authors fail to see is that the association between the term and its negative value is so strong that there is no room for neutrality. If one were to choose a definition – and the choice would only be a convention for a specific practical purpose, since there is no objective essence of terrorism to be defined – the best approach would be to assume its negativity and capture it in the definition. This is of course a clear confirmation that we are dealing with an object that has been produced and not discovered in the real world.

Though there are many other possible tactical definitions, I have chosen to comment on the ones

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389   C. A. J. Coady, 'Terrorism and Innocence': 40, 41

390   Igor Primoratz, 'The Morality of Terrorism': 222

391   Igor Primoratz, 'The Morality of Terrorism': 226

392   Igor Primoratz, 'The Morality of Terrorism': 226

proposed by Primoratz and Coady because their inescapable negative value makes them the closest to the common understanding of terrorism by civil society. The simple fact that the definition places the *innocent* as *victims*, who in most cases are civilians, is enough to see the link between the tactical definition and the emotional horror produced on the population. *The Economist*, a publication whose main audience are neither scholars nor government officials, shares the same intuition of how terrorism should be defined: "The violence [of terrorism] is aimed specifically at civilians… [It is] an act of indiscriminate violence to terrorise citizens at large". The article offers as examples the Allied bombing of Germany and the atomic weapons that vaporized Hiroshima and Nagasaki.[393] Scholars or politicians may argue otherwise, and in fact they often do, but the shocking image of the killing of innocents is still perceived as terror and emotional trauma by the civil society at large. In view of this, perhaps the tactical definition could be best described as the *civil society definition*, to contrast it better with the political status definition described below.

1.2 *Political status definitions*

The common understanding of terrorism by the population in general diverges in different degrees from official definitions of terrorism. The US State Department defines it as "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience". For the FBI, it is "the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives". According to the US Department of Defence, it is "the unlawful use of – or threatened use of – force or violence against individuals or

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393   'What is terrorism: the use of terror is more widespread and effective than is generally recognized', *The Economist* (March 2, 1996)

property to coerce or intimidate governments or societies, often to achieve political, religious, or ideological objectives".[394]

The above definitions are said to have differences simply because they reflect the priorities and particular interests of the agencies involved.[395] How these agencies interpret their own definitions and put into practice their interests may carry negative consequences for civil society. Take an example that could well be applied to the US: after September 11, the European Commission issued a draft Framework Decision, which stated that "if the motivation is to alter seriously or to destroy the fundamental principles and pillars of the state, intimidating people, there is a terrorist offence".[396] UK law considers as terrorism any threats or actions intended to influence government, "or to intimidate the public or a section of the public" for any "political, religious or ideological cause".[397] The problem with these definitions, as David Campbell has noticed, is that dissent and protest can be criminalized.[398] In addition, common criminals may be judged as terrorists and as a consequence receive punishments out of proportion with their crimes. This is especially clear with former US Attorney General Ashcroft's proposed definition of terrorism, which broadly includes "the use or threat to use 'any explosive, firearm or other weapon or dangerous device' with the intent to endanger person or property".[399]

For an example of a similar definition by a scholar consider the characteristics of terrorism according to Bruce Hoffman:

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394   Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*: 38

395   Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*: 38

396   David Campbell, 'Time is Broken: The Return of the Past In the Response to September 11', *Theory & Event*, 5-4 (2002): 6

397   David Campbell, 'Time is Broken': 6

398   David Campbell, 'Time is Broken': 6

399   David Campbell 'Time is Broken': 6

Ineluctably political in aims and motives;

Violent or threatens violence;

Designed to have far reaching psychological repercussions beyond the immediate victim or target;

Conducted by an organization with an identifiable chain of command or a conspiratorial cell (*whose members wear no uniform or identifying insignia*);

And *perpetrated by a subnational group or non-state entity*.[400] (Emphasis added.)

All of the above definitions fall within the category of what Coady calls "political status definitions", for terrorism is always performed against the state that represents the *status quo* and never by it; this is implied in the use of the words "subnational", "clandestine", "unlawful" or "non-state entity" to describe terrorist groups, and in the contention that the purpose is to "intimidate governments" or "destroy the principles and pillars of the state", in the words of the European Commission's draft Framework Decision.[401]

One of these definitions identifies the targets of terrorism as *non-combatants* (apparently making it a tactical definition); yet the identification of the perpetrators as groups different from the state puts it on the same category as the rest, for it is the implications for the exercise of power that matter the most in here.

It could be argued that the UK law and Ashcroft's definitions leave the possibility open for the government attempting to intimidate or endanger the public, acts which would become terrorism by

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400   Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*: 43

401   Quoted in David Campbell. 'Time is Broken': 6

virtue of the definitions. However, the *practice* and *applied interpretation* has so far failed to include intimidation or aggression from Western governments towards civilian populations. Again, we need to remember that these are tools of power; thus we may read the breadth of these two definitions as an attempt at facilitating their application and making them agreeable to civil society. Here we first encounter a constant of the discourse on terrorism: the implied definition of the word in any particular text is vague in order to allow the public to understand it as a threat to *innocent civilians* whilst simultaneously leaving another interpretation open: that it is the *political status quo* that needs to be defended.

The fact that terrorism is performed by only "subnational groups or non-state entities" makes out of terrorism a crime that is never imputable to the state. This way, governments get a *carte blanche* to commit acts of violence against civilians, while freely accusing any other groups of immorality and terrorism. Hoffman openly defends this position: he thinks that a reasoning that defines terrorism by the act of violence (any tactical definition) and not the motivations or justifications behind it is not satisfactory because "it fails to differentiate clearly between violence perpetrated by states and by non-states entities, such as terrorists".[402] Here Hoffman assumes that state actors are the source of legitimacy and legality, thus their justifications for violence would always make it non-terrorist. It would seem that political status definitions find their basis on the largely quoted Weberian definition of the state:

> Today, however, we have to say that a state is a human community that (successfully) claims the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory… The state is

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402   Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*: 32, 33

considered the sole source of the "right" to use violence.[403]

However, to conclude from these words that the state, by its very essence, is always legitimately entitled to use violence is a fallacy, for Weber's definition is a *description*, not a justification of the state. Michael Gold-Biss argues:

> Ultimately, "the use of physical force" by the state is legitimated by virtue of its being "successfully claimed", i.e., widely accepted and recognized as legitimate by the subjects of the states and other states. This comes close to a tautology and is clearly a utilitarian and instrumental understanding of a concept which remains as "nebulous" as that of the "state". Nevertheless, time after time, authors and experts return to their narrow and formal definition of the state as if merely stating and repeating it were sufficient to justify the concept of violence and the use of force practiced by the state.[404]

1.3 *The implied definition within the discourse and the articulation of American identity*

Most of the times in spoken and written word, and always in interpretation and application, the possibility of Western or democratic states committing terrorism is excluded. This has also been the case with the current discourse of the war on terrorism. Consider George W. Bush's speeches immediately after the attacks of September 11, 2001. While Bush does not offer a clear definition, and neither do the members of his administration – Joan Fitzpatrick writes, "the 'war against terrorism'

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403   Max Weber, 'Politics as a Vocation', in H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds.) From *Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946): 78, quoted by Michael Gold-Biss, *The Discourse on Terrorism, Political Violence and the Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism, 1981-1986* (New York: Peter Lang, 1994): 12

404   Michael Gold-Biss, *The Discourse on Terrorism*: 13

eludes definition, largely because those prosecuting the campaign find ambiguity advantageous to avoid legal constraints and to shift policy objectives with minimal accountability"[405] – we do get some clues from the words of the President:

> Great tragedy has come to us, and we are meeting it with the best that is in our country, with courage and concern for others. Because this is America. This is who we are. This is what our enemies hate and have attacked.[406] [...] America was targeted for attack because we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world.[407] [...] The American people need to know that we're facing a different enemy than we have ever faced. This enemy hides in shadows, and has no regard for human life. This is an enemy who preys on innocent and unsuspecting people, then runs for cover… This enemy attacked not just our people, but all freedom-loving people everywhere in the world.[408]

In Bush's view, terrorists hate values represented by the US, such as courage, concern for others, freedom and opportunity; they disregard human life; and they are exceptional because they are cowards who "hide in shadows", alienating themselves in actions and morality from society in general and therefore from the *status quo*, implicitly understood to be represented by the state that defends people's freedoms. The portrayal of the "enemies of America" is such that their "evil" motivations are inhuman

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405   Joan Fitzpatrick, 'Speaking Law to Power: The War Against Terrorism and Human Rights', *European Journal of International Law*, 14-2 (2003): 248, 249

406   'Radio Address of the President to the Nation', *Office of the Press Secretary*, (http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010915.html, September 15, 2001)

407   'Statement by the President in His Address to the Nation', *Office of the Press Secretary*, (http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010911-16.html, September 11, 2001)

408   'Remarks by the President In Photo Opportunity with the National Security Team', *Office of the Press Secretary*, (http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010912-4.html, September 12, 2001)

and irrational, and therefore contrary to any political settlement or ideology. (In this sense, Bush contradicts many scholarly definitions of terrorism, such as Bruce Hoffman's, who thinks that the phenomenon is "ineluctably political in aims and motives"[409], because evil and irrationality are beyond political ideology.)

While Bush does mention that the enemy "preys on innocent and unsuspecting people" (tactical definition), it is also implied that the state is never guilty of terrorism, since it represents the exact opposite of its enemy (political status definition); on other occasions he has explicitly stated that "we do not target innocent people".[410] In the end, writes Michael Gold-Biss, "WE never practiced terrorism, or even political violence, only THEY were capable of such actions".[411] Thus, we see the function of the produced object-terrorism as an articulator and reinforcer of Western and American identities.

As a consequence of the opposition between attacker and attacked Richard Johnson has interpreted Bush's (and the UK Prime Minister Tony Blair's) discourse as an expression of the idea of the other as a constitutive force in the construction of the self; the other which irrupts into the world of the self.

> 'Way of life' functions in several different ways in the speeches of Bush and Blair. 'The attack', 'terrorism' or global uncertainties more generally are represented as chaotic events which break into the orderliness of ordinary living. […] Blair draws – within the global setting – a sharp moral line between a here and an elsewhere. For him it is only the externalities that are chaotic; the interior is orderly, safe and surprisingly uniform, very much under control, though

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409   Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*: 43

410   'President Bush: "No Nation Can Be Neutral in This Conflict"', *White House*,
(http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/11/20011106-2.html, November 6, 2001)

411   Michael Gold-Biss, *The Discourse on Terrorism*: 161

threatened it is true.[412]

About a month after September 11, 2001, Bush defined the goal of terrorism as trying "to force us to change our way of life, [to] force us to retreat, [to] force us to be what we're not".[413] The state performs as the protector of Western "way of life", i.e., the existing state of affairs or *status quo*. There is a loose unification – an orderly uniformity – of everything that relates to Western society ('us'): the population, its values and way of life, the state and its laws, which are all as one under the threat of terrorism (the 'other'). This unification implies identification between civil society and the state when confronted by terrorism: it is the innocent who are attacked and so is the state; it is the state who responds and so must civil society.

This example of Bush's discourse serves to illustrate that the vagueness of his words – and those of the whole of the network of power that produces the discourse – imply both a political status definition and a tactical definition of terrorism: the state is never guilty of terrorism, still there is an appeal to civil society by identifying the victims as innocent. As a tool of power, the discursive object of *terrorism* is a versatile and malleable one. The elements of its implied definition may change according to circumstances and application; however, as it remains a tool of power, the defence of the state and the *status quo* will always occupy a central position and predominate over any identification of the victims as innocent civilians.

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412   Richard Johnson, 'Defending ways of life, The (Anti-)Terrorist Rhetorics of Bush and Blair', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 19-4 (2002): 212, 213

413   'President Says Terrorists Won't Change American Way of Life', *White House*, (http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/10/20011023-33.html, October 23, 2001)

2. Problems with the ideas of 'production' and 'truth'

The object 'terrorism' is (re)produced in the context of the events during and since September 11, 2001, as we have seen above. Further down we explore the grand themes of this discourse through examples of how they are articulated. But before proceeding, a few remarks must be made about the problems implied by the ideas of 'production' and 'truth' that should reveal some of the limits of a Foucauldian theoretical approach.

This is necessary for the analysis of the discourse of the war on terrorism because the nature of the case suggests the following: first, that in order to appreciate certain aspects of the discourse we need a point of reference with the basic objectivity of facts and events, i.e. truth at its most basic level, truth which is not produced but learned; and second, that a certain degree of repression (as opposed to production) takes place.

2.1 *Truth matters, after all*

Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda have written eloquently about the problem of radical relativism or constructivism in the context of social analysis. In order to examine what they call a "moral panic" – the phenomenon of some members of a society being perceived as an evil and existential threat to the social body – Goode and Ben-Yehuda consider its *disproportionality* or "the implication that public concern is in excess of what is appropriate if concern were directly proportional to objective harm". Thus, they need to include an objective dimension. In doing so, they distance themselves from radical relativists or strict constructionists who "wish to define the objective dimension out of existence" by arguing that all views of reality are relative and equally subjective, and

thus "[a] claim of fire in a crowded theater is simply a claim, they say – whether an actual fire exists or not is both irrelevant and incapable of verification; what's important is how and why that claim comes to be made, and by whom."[414] Although Foucault cannot be accurately characterized as a relativist, a literal interpretation of his work could lead to a similar position for the purposes of discourse analysis. Consider his claim that "underneath it all everything is already interpretation"[415]; together with his insistence that science is not marked by a "will to truth" but by a "will to power"; the idea that 'truth' is something that is produced and not discovered; and the focus on the rules and conditions of possibility of production of 'truth', as opposed to any objective referent. As mentioned above, neither Foucault nor the majority of constructivists are implying that there is no world external to thought or that all claims are of equal value.[416] However, it is true that a discourse analysis strictly based on a literal understanding of Foucault leaves little to no room for the recognition of objective facts as standards of truth or as referents for disproportionality and the recognition of lies, because facts become irrelevant and meaningless outside discourse.

Goode and Ben-Yehuda's observations are indeed relevant for an assessment of Foucault because it is not true that for the purposes of discourse analysis the meaning and interpretation we give to facts make their veracity secondary or irrelevant. It is a given that we inscribe facts and objects within a framework of understanding, but that does not imply that we should give up all standards or aspirations of truth and science when analyzing discourse.

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414   Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics: The Social Construction of Deviance* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994): 36

415   Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*: 45

416   The position is clearly explained by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, 'Post-Marxism without Apologies', *New Left Review*, 1-166 (November-December 1987): 82-84

Goode and Ben-Yehuda acknowledge the shortcomings of science. Scientists draw conclusions from incomplete information or conduct their studies poorly, and sometimes even resort to fraud.[417] I should add that it is also true that many of their conclusions are influenced by deeply embedded and unrecognized cultural or social discursive assumptions.

However, they write, admitting the flaws of science should not be stretched and twisted to reach the conclusion that whatever scientists propose "is untrue, or no more likely to be true than those made by the man and woman on the street... Even those who argue for the relativity of scientific, medical, and other expert truth in theory, *in practice* accept the fact that experts know more than the rest of us." But more to the point for this thesis, according to Goode and Ben-Yehuda

> The fact is, we place varying degrees of confidence in different statements. We can be almost completely confident that some propositions, accepted by all or almost all practicing natural or social scientists, medical figures or other experts, are true: the earth is round, not flat; species were generated over a period of billions of years through a process of evolution, and not in a single week through divine creation; the existence of the Holocaust – the systematic murder of millions of Jews and other ethnic groups by the Nazis during the 1930s and 1940s – is a verified historical fact, and is not a false claim hoked up by evil Zionists and their agents and dupes; and so on. Likewise, and more to the point of moral panics, we can have a great deal of confidence, given the nature of the evidence, that: LSD does not seriously damage chromosomes or cause birth defects; satanists are not kidnapping, abusing, torturing, and murdering tens of thousands of children every year in the United States and England; legal drug use is responsible for far

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417   Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics*: 37

more deaths than the abuse of illegal drugs; in 1982, not even close to half of Israeli high school students abused illegal drugs, nor do they do so now; in Renaissance Europe, hundreds of thousands of men and women did not literally consort with an actual, concrete devil; and so on.[418]

Likewise, many of the claims of the war on terrorism that we encounter below are equally *unlikely* to be true. This is not to say that we are currently in possession of or can ever reach absolute or ultimate truths that will once and for all reveal the true nature of the socio-political phenomenon referred to as "terrorism". Goode and Ben-Yehuda quote Stephen Gould:

> "[F]act" does not imply "absolute certainty". Absolute certainty exists only in mathematics, logic, and theology. Any statements describing the material or empirical world must retain a measure of uncertainty, small though it may be, for statements regarded as facts. Natural and especially social scientists do not make a claim to eternal, perpetual truth. According to Gould, what is called a fact is that which has been "confirmed to such a degree it would be perverse to withhold provisional assent." He adds: "I suppose that apples might start to rise tomorrow [instead of fall], but the possibility does not merit equal time in physics classrooms." [419]

In chapter 1, I have argued for the possibility of objective knowledge, albeit limited. As in hard science, determining that an empirical fact is true or false does not mean absolute certainty. Philosophical considerations aside, political events, data and facts reach the public only through a series of filters that

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418   Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics*: 37, 38

419   Stephen Jay Gould, *Hen's Teeth and Horse's Toes: Further Reflections in Natural History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1984): 255, cited in Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics*: 38

distort them on varying degrees. Journalists on the ground, the media for which they work, authorities and their sources (such as intelligence services) and any other political agents in position of informing the public are not only subject to human error, but are also capable of intentionally distorting information through selectivity and other forms of deception as part of their struggle for power. But this difficulty does not mean we should forget about the validity of empirical facts altogether when doing social science or discourse analysis. As an example for our purposes, the claim formulated in the context of the war on terrorism that Saddam Hussein's regime held weapons of mass destruction – at times suggested to be nuclear – that could be deployed against Western countries in very short period of times, could have been possible in principle, but given the information available at this point, it is so unlikely that we can reasonably declare it to be false.

So how do we reconcile the idea that 'truth' is produced with the above position that some statements can be reasonably considered to be objectively true or false? The answer, I believe, lies in the nature of the statements. Those that refer to simple events, facts and objects are either true or false; things happen or they do not, bombs explode or not, a certain number of people die and not any one more or less, whether they are reported accurately or not and regardless of the fact that we always give them a meaning and interpretation. But statements that compose greater themes and complex and often value laden discursive objects are indeed produced to the point that their veracity may become irrelevant or impossible to determine. That a certain act of violence is part of a campaign of terrorism that threatens civilization, an act of martyrdom or a struggle for freedom, are 'truths' produced for reasons related to power.

Can we not analyse discourse without the need to make any reference to basic factual statements that can be determined to be true or false? Perhaps certain discourses do not need so in order to reach a

good level of understanding, but the nature of the discourse of the war on terrorism suggests that at some points we should at least maintain a sense of the likelihood that certain statements are true or false, and contrast them with the statements that compose the discourse. The first reason for this was already explained in the previous chapter: at least some members of the network of power seem to have been influenced to some extent by a Straussian philosophy which accepts the use of 'noble lies' and the intentional creation of myths by the intellectual elite; and even if Strauss had no such influence, we observe that in the context of the war on terrorism they have occasionally distorted facts.

The second reason, as explained by Goode and Ben-Yehuda, is that "it is only by knowing the empirical nature of a given threat that we are able to determine the degree of disproportionality."[420] While it is not my objective to follow these authors' method, I do seek to rescue their sense of contrasting statements with objective facts. Because to do so is to recognize that the discourse of the war on terrorism is not only the product of underlying sociohistorical assumptions or discursive constructions proper to the American culture that surpass any given group of individuals and which determine the beliefs and identity of society as a whole. Rather, the discourse of the war on terrorism is also the product of specific people with personal worldviews and interests.

The third reason, also already mentioned, is that contrasting statements with the likely objective truth provides a venue for political resistance, at least on the individual level. Stressing the fact has an ethico-political implication, and in this respect it opens possibilities for the fulfilment of a Foucauldian aspiration: that of 'the political task', which is

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420   Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics*: 38

to criticise the working of institutions which appear to be both neutral and independent; to criticise them in such a manner that the political violence which has always exercised itself obscurely through them will be unmasked, so that one can fight them.[421]

One of the most efficient criticisms to be made of the discourse of the war on terrorism is that it has obscured events and facts under a cover of neutrality, law and justice. Straightforward examples of this can be easily understood by everyone without the need of sophisticated academic theories or jargon, and they do not need to make reference to grand ideological constructions.

In the context of criticising Foucault's conception of power, Steven Lukes argues that the trouble with Foucault is that he clothed his idea of power "in Nietzschean rhetoric, within which power excluded both freedom and truth". According to the rhetoric there can be no liberation from power, nor a way of judging between ways of life, since each imposes its own regime of truth and its 'general politics' of truth. The unsurprising consequence, Lukes continues, is that it is widely supposed that "Foucault's achievement is to have undermined 'the model of the rational, autonomous moral agent'."[422]

It might be a matter of interpretation of Foucault's works as a whole whether he actually believed that there was no possibility of freedom. As noted above, Foucault's 'political task' as an ideal meant criticism and implied, therefore, resistance, and as such the possibility of freedom, even if only in a limited form. It also appears that Foucault was speaking of 'grand truths' and not of how the production of a discourse could deal (or fail to deal) with elemental facts, i.e. basic truths. He simply appeared to

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421   Chomsky, Noam and Foucault, Michel, 'Human Nature: Justice versus Power' in F. Elders (ed.) *Reflexive Water: The Basic Concerns of Mankind*, (souvenir: London, 1974): 171, cited in Bent Flyvbjerg, 'Habermas and Foucault: thinkers for civil society?', *British Journal of Sociology* 49-2 (June 1998): 223

422   Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View* (UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005): 91, 92

have no interest in the possibility that the latter could effectively destabilize a 'regime of truth'.

2.2 *Production or repression?*

Lukes states that Foucault's idea that power both represses and produces is "repeatedly restated and developed, and also wildly overstated and exaggerated".[423] The problem, I believe, is that this exaggeration leads to an overlooking of the most obvious and traditional understandings of repressive power – even if Foucault was aware of them. Again, in the context of discursive practices, the most elemental covering of facts and events is a form of repression of factual truths – things that happened in one way or another are constantly 'spinned' by people who hold political power. It appears that this is so much taken as a given that it rarely finds its way into academic analysis, and instead the emphasis is placed on production. The original idea of production, "in its non-overstated and non-exaggerated form", Lukes explains, is simply

> that if power is to be effective, those subject to it must be rendered susceptible to its effects... 'Production' is 'positive': power in this sense 'traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse'... More specifically, it produces 'subjects', forging their character and 'normalizing them,' rendering them capable of and willing to adhere to norms of sanity, health, sexuality and other forms of propriety.[424]

This is of course true for the war on terrorism as well. Subjects are produced by contrast with the terrorist and as its mirror image. But the production of discourse and identity is not possible without at

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423   Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*: 90
424   Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*: 91

least a minimal repression of elements that do not accord with the discourse produced. Repression of alternative discourses or of facts or events is a necessity for the production of discourse. While an open and direct repression is rare in contemporary Western societies, we can still identify discursive strategies deployed that marginalize or minimize alternative discourses and possible identities.[425]

The idea of a 'regime of truth' - and what Lukes identifies as Nietzschean rhetoric - *if exaggerated*, negates the possibility of resistance by challenging the discourse with the most elemental factual truths which it seeks to repress and which it cannot explain.

3. The themes of the war on terrorism

3.1 *Genealogy and socio-historical and political specificities*

Employing the Nietzschean-Foucauldian concept of 'genealogy' consists in seeking to trace structural, epochal variations in the meaning and use of the notion of a concept, for example, 'sovereignty',[426] or 'terrorism', as we briefly saw above. The current discourse is a specific recreation of the mythology of historical American identity as described by David Campbell.[427] Tracking practices of differentiation and modes of exclusion from as far back as the European consciousness before Columbus' voyage across the Atlantic, through the creation and development of the American imagined community until what has been declared the end of the Cold War, Campbell has detected many instances where the

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425   Some of these strategies are examined in chapter 6.

426   Jan Selby, 'Engaging Foucault: Discourse, Liberal Governance and the Limits of Foucauldian IR', *International Relations*, 21 (2007): 329

427   See David Campbell, *Writing Security, United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998)

construction of 'otherness' from within and outside the nation (native tribes, Mexicans, Japanese, Soviets, drug addicts and others) has sustained the values of identity. His genealogy of American security finds its way to the present as the war on terrorism is "morphing into a re-run of the Cold War... a struggle into which any number of potential candidates – regardless of their strategic capacity to be a threat – were slotted as a threat."[428] It is not surprising that the war on terrorism has grown in a similar template as the Cold War since the neoconservative ideology was developed at the time. Some of its most notable representatives, such as Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld or Paul Wolfowitz, were involved in policy making when the Soviet Union was perceived as a threat, as noted in chapter 2.

Among the themes the current discourse has successfully (re)produced we find a global dichotomy where the US stands for democratic values and has as its mission to confront tyranny abroad. On one side of the equation there are Western democratic societies ('us'); on the other there is a vaguely defined terrorist enemy, sometimes identified with Muslim or Arab societies, others with an 'axis of evil' of 'rogue states' ('them'). Linked to this idea it is proposed that 'we' now live in an era of war and unprecedented danger. The solution is to be found in the moral leadership and military supremacy of the US asking its citizens and the rest of the world to accept that exceptional measures need to be taken, such as preemptive war or legislation and practices contrary to generally accepted civil rights and moral principles.

Richard Jackson has articulated and summarized[429] the above narratives and themes within the discourse as follows:

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428   David Campbell, 'Time is Broken'

429   See Richard Jackson, *Writing the war on terrorism: Language, Politics and Counter-Terrorism*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005): 31

The events of September 11, 2001 were presented as an 'act of war' which as such justified a 'war on terrorism'. The narrative of the events of the day were embedded in meta-narratives about Pearl Harbor, World War II, the Cold War, civilisation versus barbarism and the advance of globalisation.

Terrorists have been characterized as 'enemy aliens', evildoers, savages, barbarians, cruel and inhuman as opposed to innocent, decent, kind, loving, peaceful, united and heroic Americans (the 'us' and 'them' divide).

Terrorism has been constructed as a catastrophic threat to the American 'way of life'. Thus, terrorists are sophisticated, ruthless and numerous, working from hideouts and supported by 'rogue states' which wish to provide weapons of mass destruction. Once again, war appears as a reasonable response.

The way in which the US' counter-terrorist campaign has been carried out is 'good' and an example of a 'just war': one with a just cause, purely defensive, and which is a last resort conducted with care for the innocent. At the same time it is a 'new' and 'different' kind of war, given the peculiarities of the terrorists.

Mapping out the themes above and situating them within their genealogy is consistent with Foucault. Although much is to be learned from such an exercise, I would like to propose that it should be complemented by an appraisal of socio-historical and political specificities, where groups of people, individuals and their actions and words (their use of language) are as important as the genealogical themes within which they are immersed. As Jan Selby has written in an enlightening article on the use of Foucault within the discipline of International Relations: "[T]he critique or deconstruction of ideological categories need not rule out all analysis of structural socio-historical specificities – and it is

in this sense that there exists an ontological specificity and irreducibility to the international".[430]

I have noted earlier that when Foucault was reproached for not presenting an overall theory he replied that such a task would be both "abstract and limiting" and that his desire was rather "to *open up* problems that are as *concrete* and *general* as possible".[431] Like Foucault, my analysis has no desire to propose a theory, but rather to examine a concrete problem. Unlike him, it seeks to highlight certain specifics rather than generalities; the reason being that otherwise the uniqueness of the discourse of the war on terrorism would be lost. It is true that in a sense Foucault was particularly concerned with the specifics of society and history. By using an empirical method, he described and analysed specific historical procedures, institutions, techniques and strategies of power. The difference is that I also wish to stress specificities which refer to concrete people and groups of power, their geopolitical and ideological agendas, their actions and use of language, and the contrast with the actual facts to which they make reference.

Foucault drew a distinction between 'power' on the one hand, and 'violence' or 'force' on the other. Whereas a relationship of violence acts upon bodies or things, "the 'exercise of power consists in guiding... conduct".[432] A parallel can be drawn in terms of language and discourse. While the 'spinning' and misrepresentation of facts is a form of violence through specific examples of the use of language, the overall historical assumptions that can be traced through a genealogy (a grand discourse) are similar to a guiding or conducting principle – except that no one individual or group in particular is the conscious guide. Violence through language is, on the other hand, always done by someone specific,

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430   Jan Selby, 'Engaging Foucault': 338

431   Bent Flyvbjerg, 'Habermas and Foucault: thinkers for civil society?'

432   Jan Selby, 'Engaging Foucault': 331

and with a specific intention. It appears that Foucault was not particularly interested in specific events of the violence of language, but rather in the categories of knowledge we construct that would then result in this violence.

Likewise, a parallel can be drawn between an analysis that focuses on genealogy versus another one focusing on socio-historical specificities, and the debate of structure vs agency. Colin Wight has covered the latter debate and has taken a position that recognizes the value of both sides of the debate:

> While I have argued that particular acts and events can only be investigated for their casual patterns, significance and meaning within a structural context, I do not deny the merit in a division of labour between the explanation of particular events and that of structural understanding. Structural understanding, however, whilst necessary in order to proceed with the explanation of events, is not sufficient, since on one level, every act or event is different from every other and the precise mix of causal factors will vary with every case. Nevertheless, every social act is only possible within a structural context and no act is the outcome of a truly unique set of causal mechanisms.[433]

A strict Foucauldian approach would analyse the discourse of the war on terror through a genealogy akin to a *structure* of ideas (albeit a flexible structure, not necessarily coherent nor monolithic). This is why Wight's comment is relevant here, for analyzing specific persons, events, actions and their use of language would be closer to an analysis of agency. A complete analysis would require both approaches, but Foucault allows for the first much better than the second. Incidentally, a genealogy of American

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433   Colin Wight, *Agents, Structures and International Relations: Politics as Ontology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 293

identity and security has already been performed satisfactorily, as seen at the beginning of this section, and so the observations that follow in regards to the discourse focus more on specificities post 2001. However, I do attempt to present such specificities by detecting the major themes of the discourse that suggest themselves through patterns in the discourse.

In this regard, it should be noted that strictly speaking, it may not be possible to write a genealogy of the war on terrorism since 2001, because the object of analysis is quite new and so far has lasted for a relatively short period of time. A genealogy, as the name suggests, is much better suited for historical grand discourses expanding and morphing through hundreds of years.

We can find yet another limitation to a Foucauldian approach when attempting to apply to our case study, which is an intrinsically international affair, both in terms of language, origins and consequences. Selby points out that there are clear limits to the application of Foucault to the international arena. He notes that Foucault

> directed his critiques primarily against liberalism, focusing above all on the 'how' rather than the 'why' of modern power, and he thus provided only limited tools for analyzing core features of international politics: its inter-societal 'between-ness', its concentrations of power, the centrality of state interests and rivalries, and its marked unevenness. And it follows from this that if Foucault's insights about the practices of liberal and modern power are to be convincingly applied to the international arena, then these need to be situated within a theoretical framework that allows equally for analysis of the 'why' of power – for analyses of economic and political concentrations of power, and of economic and political interests, strategies and decisions, as

well as of the means by which subjects are disciplined, governed and constituted.[434]

Bearing in mind all the coincidences and divergences with Foucault pointed out so far, I now proceed to the themes of the discourse of the US war on terrorism which suggest themselves as identifiable patterns within current socio-historical specificities of language and actions.

3.2 *Us vs them; Democracy vs Terrorism; West vs Islam?*

Terrorism as a discursive object serves as a platform on which the themes of the war on terrorism are produced. The first theme in the discourse on terrorism is a global dichotomy reminiscent of the neoconservative ideology where the US stands for democratic values and its mission is to confront tyranny abroad. A day after the attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, Bush described "a monumental struggle of good versus evil" in which "the freedom-loving nations of the world" would stand by the US and eventually "good" would prevail.[435] The division established at that point would not allow room for third options: "You're either with us or against us in the fight against terror", remarked Bush a couple of months later. Neither neutral ground nor lack of action would be permitted: "A coalition partner must do more than just express sympathy, a coalition partner must perform… all nations, if they want to fight terror, must do something… Over time it's going to be important for nations to know they will be held accountable for inactivity".[436] That same day, speaking to the Warsaw Conference on Combating Terrorism, the president attributed a moral high standard to the war on terrorism:

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434   Jan Selby, 'Engaging Foucault': 339, 340

435   'Remarks by the President In Photo Opportunity with the National Security Team'

436   'You are either with us or against us'

Our efforts are directed at terrorist and military targets because – unlike our enemies – we value human life. We do not target innocent people, and we grieve for the difficult times the Taliban have brought to the people of their own country.[437]

A couple of days later he reinforced the message.[438] The implication is that 'we' – the west, democratic societies, the US and its allies – never commit such crimes; not even if 'we' *do* commit them. As noted above, the assumption is that terrorism is always performed against the state or the *status quo*, in this case the US or its allies.

3.2.1 *Are 'the others' Muslims and Arabs?*

Shortly after September 11 Bush sent a reassuring message to the Muslim community, relieving any guilt from it as a religious and ethnic group. "These acts of violence against innocents violate the fundamental tenets of the Islamic faith… The face of terror is not the true faith of Islam. Muslims… need to be treated with respect."[439] Speaking to the UN General Assembly he warned against the possibility that the war against terrorism would "serve as an excuse to persecute ethnic and religious minorities in any country". Innocent people, he added, should be allowed to live with their own religion and express dissent peacefully.[440]

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437   'President Bush: "No Nation Can Be Neutral in This Conflict"'

438   'President Discusses War on Terrorism', *White House* (http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/11/20011108-13.html, November 8, 2001)

439   '"Islam is Peace" Says President', *White House*, (http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010917-11.html, September 17, 2001)

440   'President Bush Speaks to United Nations', *White House*,

However, his remarks contrast with a number of comments from some of his supporters in politics and the media. For example, in the aftermath of the attacks, Republican US representative John Cooksey commented that "if I see someone [who] comes in that's got a diaper on his head and a fan belt wrapped around the diaper on his head, that guy needs to be pulled over." When someone noted that this implied illegal racial profiling, Cooksey replied "that some people, that 100% of the people who were involved in this, met a certain profile. ... [W]e can and should scrutinize people that fit that profile." Ann Coulter, contributing editor for National Review On-Line, proposed to "invade their countries, kill their leaders and convert them to Christianity".[441]

Likewise, in his column of September 12th, 2001, neoconservative Charles Krauthammer described the attacks as "war", immediately taking for granted that the terrorists were radical Islamists: "Who else trains cadres of fanatical suicide murderers who go to their deaths joyfully?" He emphatically pointed to the nations that harboured terrorists, contending that this was the front for the war against terrorism. Krauthammer would not allow any alternative views; he accused dissenting intellectuals of relativism or for blaming the US first. Because after the attacks, he argued, "has there ever been a time when the distinction between good and evil was more clear?" Ronald Reagan, he argued, had shown a better way to fight communism, and now Bush would show a better way to fight radical Islam. "The Bush doctrine marks the beginning of the rollback of the Islamic terror empire". Afghanistan marked the "turning of the tide", although the difficult part would still come in Iraq and Iran. The key to victory was to "bomb the holy warriors – and overawe the fence-sitting spectators."[442]

(http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/11/20011110-3.html, November 10, 2001)

441   'Intelligence Report, In the 'Mainstream'', *Southern Poverty Law Center*,

(http://www.splcenter.org/intel/intelreport/article.jsp?sid=109, Winter 2001)

442   Gary Dorrien, *Imperial Designs*: 101, 102, 108, 109

In a similar fashion, radio talk show host Jay Severin proposed that in order to stop Muslims from taking over the US its citizens should "all kill Muslims". He was forced to apologize on the air, though he did not lose his job. Another radio commentator, Paul Harvey, described Islam as "a religion which encourages killing". US General William G. Boykin, Undersecretary for Defence on Intelligence, removed from office in 2003, referred to Islam as an idolatrous, sacrilegious religion against which "we are waging a holy war". While discussing his pursuit of a Muslim Somali warlord, Boykin declared, "I knew that my God was bigger than his. I knew that my God was a real God and his was an idol".[443] Two years later, US Christian evangelical broadcaster Pat Robertson said on his live television programme that "the goal of Islam is… world domination", adding that radical Muslims were "satanic" and inspired by "demonic power".[444] Notice that these citations constitute examples of the phenomenon of *resonance* described by Connolly and cited in chapter 2. Members of loosely connected groups – the military, the media, religion – share discursive elements which "fold, bend, blend, emulsify, and dissolve into each other", morphing "into energized complexities of mutual imbrication and interinvolvement".[445]

Whether intended or not the fact that such comments exist as the frame and background of the discourse of the authorities sends an ambiguous double message whereby Muslims, after all, *could* indeed be targeted for their religion or ethnicity, albeit not always openly. The ambiguity is not unlike the double use of the concept of terrorism as both an attack on the innocent and never perpetrated by

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443   Linda S. Heard, 'America's Growing Culture of Hate', *Arab News*, (http://www.arabnews.com/?artid=47897, July 6, 2004)

444   'Top US evangelist targets Islam', *BBC News*, (http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/4805952.stm, March 14, 2006)

445   William E. Connolly, 'The Evangelical-Capitalist Resonance Machine', *Political Theory*, 33-6 (December 2005): 870

the state in that it may change according to circumstances and at the convenience of power. As a consequence of the ambiguity, a 2004 report prepared by the University of Michigan indicates that fifteen percent of Arab Americans in the Detroit area said to have experienced harassment or intimidation since September 11, 2001, and 60 percent worry more about their family's future than before the attacks. Most complained about derogatory comments or job discrimination, but some even declared being targeted by unfair law enforcement tactics.[446] More recently, a Washington Post-ABC News poll found that 58% of Americans believe there are more violent extremists within Islam than in any other religion and that the faith encourages violence against non-Muslims. Since January 2002 the proportion of those who believe mainstream Islam promotes violence against non-believers has risen from 14% to 32%. 46% now hold unfavourable attitudes towards Islam, compared with 24% in January 2002. An analyst cited in the study, Carroll Dougherty, from the Pew Research Centre for the People and the Press, notes as one of the possible reasons for the erosion in tolerance that after the first positive words from Bush towards Islam after September 11, 2001, there has been an absence of similar messages in the following years.[447]

Perhaps more relevant than the open discrimination from media commentators is the fact that in *practice* we find examples of specific targeting of Muslims – not because of reasonable suspicions of guilt but because of their religion. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, this is another departure from Foucault, who would preferred a distinction between the discursive and the non-discursive, and an approach to Laclau and Mouffe's notion of the interweaving of language and actions.

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446   Peter Slevin, 'Arab Americans Report Abuse', *Washington Post*, (http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A21888-2004Jul28.html, July 29, 2004)

447   Suzanne Goldenberg, 'Islamophobia is worse in America now than after 9/11, survey shows', *The Guardian*, (March 20, 2006)

For example, in September 2004 a flight was diverted from its course because pop star and charity worker Yusuf Islam, formerly known as Cat Stevens, was a passenger. His entry to the US was refused on the basis that his name was on a list of people suspected of posing "a risk of air piracy or terrorism or a threat to airline or passenger safety". The executive director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, Nihad Awad, observed that the event sent "the disturbing message that even moderate and mainstream Muslims will now be treated like terrorists".[448] Again, whether intended or not, the fact is that practices add meaning to the discourse. Practices are both consequence of the message and part of the message in their own. Through them the discourse recreates and perpetuates itself; in this sense it has gained a life of its own beyond the control of any particular group of people.

About two months before the event involving Yusuf Islam, US authorities arrested the leadership of one of the largest Muslim charities in the country, the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development. The government alleged that money from the charity passed to "charitable fronts" for Hamas, apparently as aid for the families of its members jailed or killed. Both a Hamas senior official and the charity's lawyer denied the accusation, but even if the case had been based on correct information, it does not explain why aid for family members – not militants themselves – would be considered a direct aid to terrorism. Coincidentally, Holy Land had been the subject of accusations by journalist Steven Emerson and self-described "terrorist hunter" Rita Katz – accusations which were never taken seriously because of their long history of false claims against Muslim US citizens.[449]

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448   Tania Branigan, 'US jet sent 600 miles to keep Cat Stevens away', *The Guardian*, (http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,,1310651,00.html, September 23, 2004); 'Cat Stevens refused entry to US', *The Guardian*, (http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,,1310205,00.html, September 22, 2004)

449   Hussein Ibish, 'US charity arrests raise questions regarding 'war on terror'', *The Daily Star*, (http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=10&categ_id=2&article_id=7731, August 26, 2004)

Taken as a whole other seemingly trivial practices have contributed to the message: In December 2004 Muslims returning to the US from an Islamic conference in Toronto were detained at the Lewiston-Queenston Bridge until they agreed to be fingerprinted. A spokesperson for Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection explained that people were stopped based on information that gatherings like those could be a means for terrorists to promote their cause.[450]

The discourse on terrorism has also had consequences for the subject of foreign policy in issues where the real distinction between 'good' and 'evil' is not as clear as presented by commentators, and where once again the decisive factor seems to be Islam or Arab ethnicity. Neoconservatives Daniel Pipes, Norman Podhoretz and Krauthammer have made the radical Islamist and Palestinian issues central to their work. Krauthammer has categorically maintained that the war against countries harbouring terrorism had to go through Palestine, even if Israel had to do the actual fighting. His argument was that Yasir Arafat was committed to the destruction of Israel, Palestine was a "nasty police state", and thus the only alternative was to eliminate the Palestinian Authority. If the US and Europe would not do it, then "Israel should be allowed to go in and do the job itself".[451]

The neoconservatives and members of the Israel lobby were following a strategic rhetoric of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who shortly after September 11, 2001, equated Osama Bin Laden and Al-Qaeda with Arafat and the Palestinian Authority, Hamas, Hizbollah, Iraq and Iran.[452] Joel Beinin comments that the fact that the Bush administration would later adopt Sharon's argument of equivalence "demonstrates how easily the term [terrorism] can be abused to obscure the disparate

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450   'Muslims seek probe on being fingerprinted', *The Buffalo News*, (http://www.buffalo.com/, December 30, 2004)

451   Gary Dorrien, *Imperial Designs*: 101-109

452   Joel Beinin, 'The Israelization of American Middle East Policy Discourse', *Social Text*, 21-2 (2003): 125

histories of events that appear superficially similar".[453]

When Bush announced his support for the 'road map' for the peace in Palestine in March 2003, William Kristol, Donald Kagan, and Krauthammer said that supporting a Palestinian state "was pathetic and dangerous, because it was rewarded by terrorism". The *Weekly Standard* urged Bush to finish the job in Iraq, extend the war on terrorism to other countries, and hold off on the peace process until Arafat and Palestinian terrorism were gone. In Podhoretz's view, there was "not a smidgen of difference" between Bush's war in Afghanistan and Sharon's invasion of the West Bank, since both were waged "for exactly the same reason": to destroy terrorists. Podhoretz believed that to be complete the Bush Doctrine needed to assimilate Israel's war against terrorism "into our own".[454]

In what may be considered an example of resonance within the network of power, these calls seem to eventually have had an effect on the actual policies of the US government. Over the six months after September 11, 2001, vice president Dick Cheney and the then secretary of State Colin Powell, the leading spokesmen for two different viewpoints within the administration on the Middle East, each made extensive trips through the region in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, although in the end it was Cheney's vision that prevailed. To the so called 'hawks' of the Bush administration, including Cheney, Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz, the most important factor was the supposed underlying confluence of interests between Arafat's Palestinian leadership and Saddam Hussein in Iraq. They believed that each reinforced the other. Therefore, their short-term priority was to end the Palestinian uprisings. Long-term progress would only be achieved by finding a

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453   Joel Beinin, 'Is Terrorism a Useful Term in Understanding the Middle East and the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict', *Radical History Review*, 85 (Winter 2003): 22

454   Gary Dorrien, *Imperial Designs*: 203, 210

way to make the Palestinian leadership more accommodating.[455] Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz and other Pentagon leaders resisted the idea that the administration should come down hard on Sharon, arguing that the Israeli military operations were part of a legitimate campaign against terrorism.

On June 24, 2002, Bush delivered a speech on the Middle East where he did not call for an international peace conference, as Powell had proposed; instead, he urged the Palestinian people to elect new leaders who were "not compromised by terror". Bush promised that after a new, democratic Palestinian leadership was in place, the US would support the creation of a Palestinian state, explicitly abandoning Arafat. Also discarded was the past approach of seeking concessions from both Israelis and Palestinians at the same time. Under Bush's new policy, it would be up to the Palestinians to change their leadership first, before Israel was required to take new steps of its own toward peace.[456] A couple of years later the president described Sharon as a "man of peace", ignoring the background of a leader known for his ruthlessness in war, particularly for his role in the Sabra and Shatila massacre in southern Lebanon in the 1980s, a crime of which he was declared "personally responsible" by the official 1993 Israeli report.[457]

The discourse on terrorism has been delivered on different levels, but with one general outcome. On one of these levels, the White House had been at first politically correct in its separation between Islam and terrorism, but eventually mostly silent about this essential distinction. Another level appears where lesser commentators have openly and aggressively equated Islam or Arab ethnicity with terrorism,

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455   James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*: 322

456   James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*: 324, 326

457   Robert Fisk, 'By endorsing Ariel Sharon's plan George Bush has legitimised terrorism', *The Independent*, (http://news.independent.co.uk/world/fisk/story.jsp?story=511850, April 16, 2004)

promoting rough and simplistic categories, such as linking the events of September 11 with the complex Palestinian conflict. The comments, added to a number of practices, resonate with each other and presumably have an influence on US government policies. This way, the final result of the equation of the overall message, while being ambivalent and contradictory – and thus more useful to power for its versatility – is a general demonisation of a specific group of people.

That the openly discriminatory face of the discourse serves a functional role for power is manifest through the selective application of the war on terrorism. It is not true that terrorism and tyranny are targeted; only terrorism and tyranny that have been identified as Muslim or Arab *and* that have been identified as enemies by the network of power emitting the discourse. The selectivity works both for foreign policy and through capillary power, in the everyday life of occupied countries such as Afghanistan and Iraq, and within the US itself.

It is also easy to see in the examples above that there exists a high degree of disproportionality in regards to any real threat, especially if it is said to be as dire as a "war". There is no need to make use of statistics or other empirical data to realize that targeting a segment of the population for their religion, their names or the clothes they wear bears no relation to a perceived danger – whether real or not – to the US as a political or a cultural entity.

3.3 *A new era of war and unprecedented danger*

The second grand theme in the discourse has an almost apocalyptic connotation. According to Bush and many in the chorus the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 were more than crimes, "they were acts of war". The side under attack is that of "freedom and democracy", whilst the attacker is a "different

enemy than we have ever faced", one that "hides in shadows, and has no regard for human life".[458] It is not a regular war, but "a new kind of war".[459] Similarly, two days after the attacks, Wolfowitz told reporters "that we have, unfortunately, entered a new era." That week, Wolfowitz spoke of parallels with the last world war, revealing the magnitude of his thoughts: "As Winston Churchill commented on the day after Pearl Harbor, dictators underestimate America's strength." In those days, he also warned that the danger would not stop with taking care of a few criminals; rather, what was needed was a broad campaign to cut off the entire terrorist's support system. The deputy secretary of Defence called for a strategy of "ending states who support terrorism." He must have realized the implications of his words, for a day later he corrected himself, asserting that he had meant "ending state support for terrorism". However, he did name Saddam Hussein as "one of the most active supporters of state terrorism".[460]

This new war would not be regular. During the Afghanistan military campaign, Rumsfeld commented in a talk show that "it would be long" and "difficult". He later told American soldiers in the field that with the close of the Afghan campaign "your job is certainly not over". Bush had already warned at the beginning of the campaign that the "war on terrorism begins with Al Qaeda, but it does not end there", while Powell regularly spoke of Afghanistan as "phase one" of a larger war.[461]

The members of the Bush administration contend that if the US does not make the world better, it will grow more dangerous. In his West Point address of 1 June 2002, Bush said:

458   'Remarks by the President In Photo Opportunity with the National Security Team'

459   'President Pledges Assistance for New York in Phone Call with Pataki, Giuliani', *White House*,
(http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010913-4.html, September 13, 2001)

460   James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*: 300, 301

461   James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*: 308, 309

Today our enemies see weapons of mass destruction as weapons of choice. For rogue states these weapons are tool of intimidation and military aggression against their neighbours. These weapons may also allow these states to attempt to blackmail the U.S. and our allies to prevent us from deterring or repelling the aggressive behaviour of rogue states. Such states also see these weapons as their best means of overcoming the conventional superiority of the U.S.[462]

The suggestion that the enemies are more than a small group of people, but "rogue states" with "weapons of mass destruction as weapons of choice" is what sustains the president's assertions that "peril draws closer and closer", a point that has been stressed several times, including the 2002 State of the Union.[463] Indeed, during the last stages of the Afghan war, there had been a shift in the public rhetoric. The emphasis increasingly fell on the danger that Al Qaeda might obtain weapons of mass destruction. Rumsfeld said that it was "reasonable to assume" that Bin Laden had some access to chemical or biological weapons. Bush warned that terrorists were "searching for weapons of mass destruction, the tools to turn their hatred into holocaust".[464] Initially the focus was on terrorists obtaining weapons of mass destruction, but before long, there was another switch and the attention began to focus on the potential suppliers.[465] Revealingly, at West Point Bush also said that "even weak states and small groups *could* attain a catastrophic power to strike great nations... *If we wait for threats to fully materialize*, we will have waited too long" (emphasis added); and speaking to a special session of the German Parliament on May 23, 2002: "*if* these regimes and their terrorist allies *were* to perfect these capabilities, no inner voice of reason, no hint of conscience would prevent their use", suggesting

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462   Robert Jervis, 'Understanding the Bush Doctrine', *Political Science Quarterly*, 118-3 (2003): 369

463   James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*: 327

464   James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*: 317

465   James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*: 317

that the US had to take action before the weapons were acquired[466] (emphasis added). The implication of the conditional tense is that the threat is a possibility and not an actuality, thus contradicting the original statement that we are, in fact and already, in a new kind of confrontation.

In terms of the approach for discourse analysis, the relevance of the language of war and the mention of states and heads of states is that they are an indication of a specific international agenda and geopolitical strategy; and therefore, the members of the network of power are not simply reproducing the discourse of World War II, nor merely speaking as a result of socio-historic ideas and assumptions, i.e. a long-lasting discourse of American identity and security such as the one analysed by Campbell.[467] This is where a Foucauldian approach turns out to be limited and could be better complemented by other understandings of power.

3.3.1 *Producing a sense of threat at home*

Once again, certain practices have helped produce a sense of threat within the US. A June 2006 case illustrates the point and serves as an example of disproportionality. Seven men were arrested in a warehouse in Miami for planning to blow up Chicago's Sears Tower and an FBI building in North Miami Beach. According to the FBI and US Attorney-General Alberto Gonzales they were "home-grown terrorists" inspired by "a violent jihadist message" who had sworn allegiance to al-Qaeda, yet had no contacts with it. No weapons were found and their plan was described as "aspirational" rather than "operational".[468]

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466   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 140

467   See David Campbell, *Writing Security*

468   'Seven charged over 'Chicago Plot'', *BBC News*, (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/5110342.stm, June 23,

The case against the men was based on comments that their leader Narseal Batiste made to FBI informants who pretended to represent Osama bin Laden. The warehouse in which they were meeting had been rented and wired for sound and video by FBI agents. The informants provided the money, the meeting place, video cameras for conducting surveillance, cell phones, and suggested the Miami FBI office as their first target.

The plot of the group was unlikely to succeed or even to be ever carried out; it featured self-proclaimed militant religious leaders who referred to themselves as kings; talked of establishing their own nation inside the US by declaring the independence of a sect, the Moorish Science Temple; called their headquarters an embassy and discussed plans to train their recruits to use bows and arrows and jump from bridges into the water. Batiste's father declared to the media that his son was "not in his right mind" and needed psychiatric treatment, while defendant lawyers alleged that the oath to al-Qaeda was "induced by the government themselves in an effort to set these people up."[469]

In spite of the small probability that the group would successfully commit acts of terrorism, Gonzalez stressed that if "left unchecked, these home grown terrorists may prove to be as dangerous as groups like al Qaeda."[470]

This was not the first case that was blown out of proportion. A popular 2004 BBC documentary, *The Power of Nightmares* – whose main argument is that for lack of a convincing ideology contemporary

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469   Walter Pincus, 'FBI role in Terror Probe Questioned', *Washington Post*, (http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/09/01/AR2006090101764.html, September 2, 2006)

470   'Transcript of Press Conference Announcing Florida Terrorism Indictments', *Department of Justice*, (http://149.101.1.32/ag/speeches/2006/ag_speech_0606231.html, June 23, 2006)

leaders make use of fear as a way to secure their power and authority – makes a point of cases where the evidence was misinterpreted or exaggerated in order to give the impression of the existence of dangerous terrorist 'sleeper' cells.[471] In the first terror trial after the September 11, 2001 attacks, the US government based its case against four men of Middle-Eastern descent largely on the words of Youssef Hmimssa, a 'career con man' in jail for fraudulent use of credit cards and identity theft who agreed to testify in exchange for a reduction of his sentence. Hmimssa had previously denied that he knew anything about terrorists. Later he gave details of alleged attack plans and targets.[472] According to the BBC documentary, Hmimssa declared to a prison mate that he had made up his declaration.

The case against the alleged terror cell was also based on two sketches drawn on a day planner and found in the Detroit apartment of three of the men. The sketches are a series of doodles that the prosecution interpreted as plans of a hospital in Amman, Jordan, and an American air base in Turkey.[473] The true meaning of the drawings is disputed and it is unlikely that it will ever be known. The BBC adds that they appear to have been drawn by a previous occupier of the apartment and not by the men accused.

The final piece of evidence was a video of landmarks in New York, Las Vegas and California which was interpreted as a surveillance video for later terrorist operations. However, a man who appears in the video testified that it was amateur footage from a Tunisian university student trip in which he took part. He said he believed another member of the student group may have sold the cameras after the trip

471   *The Power of Nightmares, Part 3: The Shadows in the Cave*. Documentary. Directed by Adam Curtis. (BBC, 2004)

472   Ronald J.Hansen, David Shepardson and Norman Sinclair, 'Con man key to terror convictions', *The Detroit News*, (http://www.detnews.com/2004/specialreport/0403/29/a01-106160.htm, March 29, 2004)

473   The sketches can be seen online at 'Suspicious sketches', *The Detroit News*, (http://detnews.com/2004/specialreport/0403/29/a01-105564.htm, March 28, 2004)

later back in Tunisia.[474] The BBC included parts of the footage of the video and the scenes selected appear to confirm this version, as they show young women and men in a relaxed mood in tourist landmarks such as Disneyland.

Though three years later after their detention the Justice Department admitted that the prosecution was filled with a "pattern of mistakes and oversights" and a judge dropped the charges of the two men who had been found guilty[475], the Bush administration had already hailed the detention of the men as a success in the war on terrorism. On the second anniversary of the 2001 attacks, Bush included the Detroit four among the alleged terrorists that had been "thwarted", along with cases from Buffalo, Seattle, Portland, North Carolina and Tampa. Declaring that 260 suspected terrorists had been charged in US courts and 140 already convicted, he asked the Congress to "change the law and give law enforcement officials the same tools they have to fight terror that they have to fight other crime".[476]

While it is beyond the focus of this thesis to examine each one of those cases in detail, it is worth considering Georgetown University's professor of Law David Cole's declaration to the BBC that "when you look at the details [of the above mentioned cases] the facts just don't support that [these are sleeper terrorist cells] and [the authorities] have not proved that any group within the United States has plotted to engage in any terrorist activity within the United States in all of the cases that they have

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474   'Key evidence in terror case is disputed; feds admit troubles', *The Associated Press*,

(http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2004-08-12-terror-detroit_x.htm, August 12, 2004)

475   'Feds Red-Faced Over Terror Case', *CBS News*,

(http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2004/09/02/terror/main640559.shtml, September 1, 2004)

476   'Bush asks Congress to Stiffen Anti-Terrorist Measures', *U.S. Diplomatic Mission to Italy*,

(http://www.usembassy.it/file2003_09/alia/A3091004.htm, September 10, 2003)

brought since 9/11".[477]

Naturally, that there are some cases where we can be reasonably certain that the threat has been exaggerated does not prove that all cases suffer from the same degree of disproportionality. The information presented here does show, however, that there is a tendency, manifested more than once through certain practices of people in positions of power, to support and stimulate the theme of a constant danger from terrorism. These practices resonate when their results become material for the declarations of higher ranking officers in the administration, just as the original declarations appear to have stimulated the practices. Furthermore, the declarations often serve the purpose of justifying specific changes in policy or law, i.e. a direct exercise of power that would otherwise have not been easily accepted by the population. When signing the controversial Patriot Act, Bush emphasized that the new law would "help counter a threat like no other our nation has ever faced".[478]

3.3.2 *Producing a sense of threat abroad*

The threat has also been characterized as coming from abroad and requiring military action. The president declared that the "war on terror will not be won on the defensive", announcing that "this nation will act"; thus, all US citizens had to "be ready for preemptive action when necessary to defend our liberty and to defend our lives".

The most obvious example of the discourse of threat is the war on Iraq. In an address to the UN

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477   *The Power of Nightmares, Part 3: The Shadows in the Cave*

478   'President Signs Anti-Terrorism Bill', *White House*,

(http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/10/20011026-5.html, October 26, 2001)

General Assembly on September 12, 2002 Bush focused on the case against Iraq while repeating the argument that "we cannot stand by and do nothing while dangers gather."[479] On another speech on 7 October 2002, he called for the disarmament of Iraq and inserted phrases like "on September 11th, 2001, America felt its vulnerability", thus linking the powerful psychological memory of September 11, 2001, with Saddam Hussein. Three months later, when accused of wanting to invade Iraq, Bush replied: "prior to September 11, we were discussing smart sanctions. ...After September 11, the doctrine of containment just doesn't hold any water. ...My vision shifted dramatically after September 11, because I now realize the stakes, I realize the world has changed." Rumsfeld followed him by explaining that the US "did not act in Iraq because dramatic new evidence of Iraq's pursuit of weapons of mass murder. We acted because we saw the existing evidence in a new light, through the prism of our experience on September 11."[480] We should recall, however, that neoconservatives had long had Iraq as one of their targets. They were also producing a discourse of danger at least for a full year before the attacks on the WTC and the Pentagon: a 2000 document published by *The Project for the New American Century* that called for a "revolution in military affairs" lamented that the transformation would occur slowly – unless "some catastrophic and catalyzing event – like a New Pearl Harbor" took place.[481] Again, this speaks of an explicit agenda promoted by specific groups of people. Foucauldian considerations about history and identity may serve as a context but are not sufficient to explain the specificities.

It appears that a revolution in military affairs is what was being sought. While touring Europe, Wolfowitz repeatedly argued that the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty negotiated by the Nixon administration no longer made sense. "The world of 2001 is fundamentally different from that of

479   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 141
480   Robert Jervis, *Understanding the Bush Doctrine*: 371, 372
481   'Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategy, Forces and Resources for a New Century', *The Project for the New American Century* (September 2000): 51

1972," he said, wondering why more than a decade after the Berlin Wall came down "we are still in some ways… wedded to old Cold War notions of deterrence."[482] Following the same line of thought, Bush announced in December 2001 that the US would withdraw from the ABM treaty because the agreement "was written in a different era, for a different enemy". The irony is that Bush and Wolfowitz are attempting to stimulate a discourse that borrows much from the Cold War by establishing a distance from the Cold War strategy of deterrence. In this respect Foucault was correct by observing that discourses were often marked by discontinuities. The case in hand suggests that discontinuities may be the result of socio-historical specificities: groups of people, their language and actions.

In early 2002 the Pentagon delivered to Congress a classified document: the Nuclear Posture Review. The new strategy shifted the nuclear purpose away from the concepts of defence and deterrence and towards war fighting: bunker-busting nuclear weapons could be employed against enemy supplies of chemical or biological weapons, and nuclear weapons could also be used in response to "an Iraqi attack on Israel or its neighbours, or a North Korean attack on the South, or a military confrontation over the status of Taiwan". No explanation is given of how a nuclear offensive strategy would effectively combat terrorism, apart from Rumsfeld's: "The terrorists who struck us on Sept. 11 were clearly not deterred from doing so by the massive U.S. nuclear arsenal", therefore "defending against terrorism and other emerging 21st Century threats requires that we take the war to the enemy". In short, "the best and in some cases the only defence is a good offence."[483]

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482   James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*: 313

483   James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*: 314, 315

3.4 *US military supremacy as a solution*

The sense of threat leads to the conclusion that the US must seek supremacy, mostly in military terms. With the self-granted right to preemptive action the US established itself as "the world's preeminent power, as the chief judge and enforcer of international stability", as James Mann put it. In the West Point Speech, Bush shared his view of a world dominated by a superpower so militarily strong that any attempts to match it would not be worth the effort. He warned: "America has, and intends to keep, military strength beyond challenge, thereby making the destabilizing arms races of other eras pointless, and limiting rivalries to trade and other pursuits of peace."[484]

Neoconservative commentators again reinforced the message by explicitly supporting US supremacy. While Krauthammer argued against the need for seeking legitimacy with other countries for US military action,[485] the *Weekly Standard* published as its main feature an article entitled "The Case for American Empire," by Max Boot, a month after September 11, 2001. Boot wrote that imperialist realism was the country's most realistic option; the terrorist attacks were a call for the US to unambiguously embrace its imperial responsibilities.[486] He also declared that the invasion of Afghanistan "provided a vital boost for US security, not only by routing the terrorist network, but also by dispelling the myth of US weakness", and in March 2003 claimed that "the invasion of Iraq will be another vital step toward restoring a healthy fear of US power".[487]

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484   James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*: 328; Robert Jervis, 'Understanding the Bush Doctrine': 372

485   G. John Ikenberry, 'The End of the Neo-Conservative Moment', *Survival*, 46-1 (2004): 13

486   Gary Dorrien, *Imperial Designs*: 155

487   G. John Ikenberry, 'The End of the Neo-Conservative Moment': 14

3.5 Idealism

The then National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice had also far-reaching schemes in her mind; hers were not constrained to the military. According to Rice the US is not merely fighting terrorism but constructing a whole new order, born from the changes that have taken place after the collapse of Soviet power, in a transition that is now coming to an end: this is "a period akin to 1945 to 1947, when American leadership expanded the number of free and democratic states – Japan and Germany among the great powers – to create a new balance of power that favoured freedom."[488]

The members of the Bush administration have attempted to balance the negative idea of an unprecedented and threatening struggle with a positive one which may be identified as idealism. A possibility of progress is offered. A week after September 11, 2001, Bush is reported to have told one of his advisers: "We have an opportunity to restructure the world toward freedom, and we have to get it right." Six months afterwards, in a formal speech, he said: "When the terrorists are disrupted and scattered and discredited,... we will see then that the old and serious disputes can be settled within the bounds of reason, and goodwill, and mutual security. I see a peaceful world beyond the war on terror, and with courage and unity, we are building that world together."[489]

Having examined in the previous chapter the possible Straussian origins of the network of power, together with the known examples of misrepresentation of facts, we should not immediately assume that the declarations above are motivated by moral values and ideals – at least not by them alone. As discussed, the Straussian ideology that seems to have influenced neoconservatism to some extent

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488   James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*: 316
489   Robert Jervis, 'Understanding the Bush Doctrine': 368

advised the elite to make use of 'noble lies' and to create myths to conceal the truths of power. Again, a Foucauldian perspective is helpful as a platform to understand discourses and myths that surpass the actions, language and intentions of any individual or group of people; Foucault's notions of the inescapability of interpretation[490] and a discursive standpoint as a requirement to make sense of things[491] suggest deeply embedded historical and cultural assumptions that permeate society as a whole, even if discontinuously. But it does not have much to say about the possibility of groups in positions of power consciously producing or reinventing discourses and myths, what degree of success they may have in such endeavour, and what role they may play in creating the discontinuities observed by Foucault.

3.6 *Targeting states: the axis of evil*

The neoconservative group shifted the policy of the war on terrorism from what could have been exclusively political and intelligence-based mechanisms – similar to those that have been applied in countries such as Northern Ireland or the Basque country against rebel or separatist groups – and into a much broader model of state-on-state conflict. Conservative critics Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke have used the term 'hijacking' to describe the takeover by neoconservative plans that had been in preparation for at least a decade. The 'hijack' consisted of controlling the debate in order to exclude other options, promoting an almost exclusive focus on the Middle East and the use of military force not simply for defensive purposes but for preemptive reasons.[492]

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490   Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*: 45
491   Jacob Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse*: 94
492   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 138, 139

The countries to be targeted were explicitly identified by neoconservatives both in and out of the government. In the first days after September 11, Wolfowitz and Scooter Libby argued that the forces behind terrorism in the Middle East were all interconnected, therefore, if the US could defeat Saddam Hussein, terrorist groups throughout the region would be weakened.[493] The day of the attacks in New York and Washington presidential speechwriter David Frum spent an hour on the telephone with Richard Perle, whose first response to the events was to counsel that the US go after "not just terrorists, but whoever harbours those terrorists".[494] Likewise, Krauthammer wanted the US to attack not only Afghanistan, but also Syria, Iraq and Iran, urging government officials to focus on countries harbouring terrorists, not on the terrorist networks themselves. "The overriding aim of the war on terrorism is changing regimes", he declared openly – a statement more evidently linked to geopolitical strategy and a specific international agenda than issues of American identity and security. Kristol and Kagan used their columns, television appearances, and the PNAC to make the case for extending the war to Iraq, Iran, and Hezbollah, usually in that order.[495] Cheney announced that the administration had concluded that it would bring down "the full wrath of the United States" upon nations that provide sanctuary or support for terrorists. Asked about Iraq, though, he said that Osama was the target "at the moment… at this stage". In late November 2001 Richard Armitage admitted that while it had been unsuccessfully tried to tie Iraq and Al Qaeda together, he had the view that there were "enough problems with Iraq with its weapons of mass destruction", something for which they would have to pay a price sooner or later.[496] He did not provide evidence for the latter claim.

The president followed the lead of the neoconservative network. On the night of September 11, 2001,

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493   James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*: 302

494   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 32

495   Gary Dorrien, *Imperial Designs*: 102, 103, 157

496   James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*: 303, 310

Bush used the suggested phrase about targeting "those who harbour" terrorists. For a moment, on September 12, he seemed to aim at non-state actors by saying that "this enemy hides in shadows". But on October 7, as the Afghan war opened, he added: "Today we focus on Afghanistan, but the battle is broader. Every nation has a choice to make. In this conflict, there is no neutral ground. If any government sponsors the outlaws and killers of innocents, they have become outlaws and murderers, themselves." By his State of the Union address on January 29, 2002, he was firmly focusing on states. He termed Iran, Iraq, and North Korea the "axis of evil", a phrase that has been credited to Frum.[497]

Frum later confessed that the original aim of the speech of the State of the Union was specifically to target Iraq. Mark Gerson, Bush's speechwriter, had asked him to find a justification for war against this country. Iran was added later, and finally North Korea as a seemingly casual afterthought.[498]

Frum's admission simply confirms that key elements of the discourse on terrorism had conveniently morphed through different speeches to suit the neoconservative agenda – that it was more or less coherent with historic ideals proper to American culture does not appear to be the main motivating factor, but rather the condition of possibility for the specificities of the discourse of the war on terrorism. James Mann describes the transformation:

> Thus over a period of less than five months the administration had progressively shifted the focus of the war on terrorism from (a) retaliating against the perpetrators of the September 11 attacks to (b) stopping terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction to (c) preventing states from supplying terrorists with these weapons. Indeed, there were suggestions in Bush's

497   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 31, 32, 139
498   James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*: 318

speech that a link between the states and terrorism wasn't absolutely necessary; what mattered above all were (d) the axis-of-evil states and their weapons programs.

Over the fourteen months after the 2002 State of the Union, while the administration prepared for the invasion of Iraq, officials repeatedly emphasized that Saddam Hussein was developing weapons of mass destruction.[499] This had been chosen as the primary justification for war. Wolfowitz admitted in a May 2003 interview with *Vanity Fair* that the main reason for war had been a deliberate choice:

> The truth is that for reasons that have a lot to do with the U.S. government bureaucracy we settled on the one issue that everyone could agree on which was weapons of mass destruction as the core reason, but... there have always been three fundamental concerns. One is weapons of mass destruction, the second is support for terrorism, the third is the criminal treatment of the Iraqi people. Actually I guess you could say there's a fourth overriding one which is the connection between the first two... The third one by itself, as I think I said earlier, is a reason to help the Iraqis but it's not a reason to put American kids' lives at risk, certainly not on the scale we did it. That second issue about links to terrorism is the one about which there's the most disagreement within the bureaucracy...[500]

Months after the facts, Zalmay Khalilzad, who was in charge of Iraq policy for Rice's National Security Council, confirmed that the removal of weapons of mass destruction was not the real reason for war by

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499   James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*: 318, 319

500   'Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz Interview with Sam Tannenhaus, Vanity Fair', *United States Department of Defense*, (http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2003/tr20030509-depsecdef0223.html, Updated May 29, 2003)

stating that the administration would not be satisfied without regime change.[501] Finally, at the end of

March 2006, *The New York Times* confirmed that the weapons of mass destruction were not the relevant

issue when it cited a confidential British memorandum where Bush made clear to Blair in January 2003

that he was determined to invade Iraq without a UN resolution and even if arms inspectors failed to

find weapons of mass destruction in the country.[502]

We learn from Wolfowitz, Khalilzad, and the British memorandum that the network of power picked a

primary justification out of three or four for an invasion that was already decided for a different reason,

possibly making use of a 'noble lie'.

Once an argument for the public was chosen the neoconservatives divulged it. Richard Perle, James

Woolsey and other officials and former officials pressed it throughout 2002. In Perle's words, "The

casus belli is that we know Saddam Hussein possesses chemical and biological weapons... We know

that he hates the United States. We know that he is working on nuclear weapons." On August 26 2002,

Cheney rejected sending UN weapons inspectors back to Iraq, because "Saddam has perfected the art

of cheat and retreat, and is very skilled in the art of denial and deception". He assured that Saddam had

resumed his attempts to acquire nuclear weapons and to enhance the country's capabilities in chemical

and biological weapons, adding that Iraq had 10 percent of the world's oil reserves, and if Hussein had

weapons of mass destruction, he "could then be expected to seek domination of the entire Middle East,

taking control of a great portion of the world's energy supplies." The president followed the vice

president: in a speech to the UN General Assembly on September 12, 2002, Bush warned that if

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501   James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*: 348

502   'Bush told Blair determined to invade Iraq without UN resolution or WMD', *Agence France Presse*,
(http://news.yahoo.com/, March 27, 2006)

Hussein wanted peace, he should "disclose and remove or destroy" all weapons of mass destruction. These weapons would never be found. David Kay, the former UN weapons inspector appointed to run the CIA's postwar search for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, told Congress in October 2003 that Iraq's nuclear program had been in only "the very most rudimentary" state.[503]

When European nations criticized the new approach of the US, Krauthammer replied by calling Europe an "axis of petulance. …The ostensible complaint is American primitivism. The real problem is their irrelevance." Powell said that the French Foreign Minister Hubert Védrine – who had called Bush's State of the Union "simplistic" – was "getting the vapours".

A double standard was revealed when North Korea confirmed it had an ongoing nuclear weapons program and the Bush administration insisted there was no sense of crisis or urgency. Powell noted that "with respect to Iran and with respect to North Korea, there is no plan to start a war with those nations", omitting Iraq from his comment. What was taking place with North Korea was "not a crisis," according to Powell.[504] Their lack of interest in North Korea in contrast to their position towards Iraq reveals the selective use of language and therefore a specific intentionality; again, one which cannot be explained away by simply making reference to issues of national identity.

3.7 *Preemption*

It was at the West Point address in June 2002 that the president first talked about the key concept of "preemptive action" that would be part of the justification for the Iraq war. "We must take the battle to

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503   James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*: 334, 340-342, 361
504   James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*: 321, 332, 346

the enemy, disrupt his plans and confront the worst threats before they emerge," the president said. "Preemptive action" meant that the US could start a war if it felt threatened, that containment and deterrence would now be forgotten – in contradiction with a principle of the United Nations Charter: that of war only as self-defence.[505] Considering the degree of disproportionality in the theme of threat and the specific international goals of the neoconservatives, the idea of preemption results almost in an euphemism for attack at will.

The administration's policy of preemption achieved formal status when it was included in the National Security Strategy published on September 17, 2002, described by neoconservative Max Boot as a "quintessentially neoconservative document". Halper and Clarke rightly describe the doctrine of preemption as "a kind of global Monroe Doctrine" married to the Wilsonian ideal to "bring the hope of democracy, development, free markets and free trade to every corner of the world"; a policy that would require a greatly enabled and reconfigured US military.[506]

It should be stressed that the idea was not to take the initiative against an enemy who was about to attack the US, but rather to take action "against... emerging threats *before* they are fully formed," (emphasis added) as Bush explained in a letter accompanying the National Security Strategy.[507]

The strategy openly argues that this is the proper way to proceed against terrorism, thus placing preemption as a central strategy of the war on terrorism:

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505   James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*: 327, 328
506   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 142, 143
507   Robert Jervis, 'Understanding the Bush Doctrine': 369

Traditional concepts of deterrence will not work against a terrorist enemy whose avowed tactics are wanton destruction and the targeting of innocents; whose so-called soldiers seek martyrdom in death and whose most potent protection is statelessness... The United States has long maintained the option of preemptive action to counter a sufficient threat to our national security. The greater the threat, the greater is the risk of inaction – and the more compelling the case for taking anticipatory action to counter a sufficient threat to our national security.[508]

The document did include some references to cooperation and balance of power[509], but they were in conflict with the vision of an unchallengeable US superpower with right to preemptive attack.

4. Principles of production and reinforcement of discourse

This section seeks to identify some of the systems of exclusion explained by Foucault which are at work in the production and reinforcement of a discourse, while assessing their actual relevance to the discourse of the war on terrorism.

4.1 *Opposition Between True and False*

The first principle, already implicit in the examples above, is the *opposition between true and false*. As seen above, some of the producers of the discourse of the war on terrorism may have made certain propositions with the idea of the Straussian 'noble lie' in mind. But here I wish to consider Foucault's

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508   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 143

509   James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*: 329

notion that when things are seen from a grand scale and above the level of propositions, the "will to know" becomes an institutionally confining system. Like the other systems of exclusion, the *will to truth* rests on an institutional support: pedagogy, the system of books, publishing, libraries, learned societies and laboratories. It also tends to exert "a sort of pressure and something like a power constraint" on other discourses.[510]

Following Foucault, what lies at the bottom of the true/false divide in our society is a pretension of sustaining one's claims with science, which implies a specific method and a *will to truth*. Much of his work was aimed at showing how a *will to power* hides underneath this alleged neutral and scientific description of reality. While every producer of a discourse needs to appear to sustain their claims on science, or more generally on this *will to truth*, in order to achieve and preserve credibility, the demands for evidence and rationality vary depending on the context and the discipline. More rigor is demanded from a scholar than a politician.

While I have argued in a previous section that basic facts as revealed by scientific research should not be dismissed on the basis of radical relativistic arguments, Foucault's observations are valid here in the sense that the discourse of the war on terrorism seeks to validate itself as a scientific 'truth' for reasons of power. In what follows I seek to explore the possibility that works of research and science may have had an effect on the post-September 11, 2001 discourse on terrorism, i.e. if science has exerted a sort of pressure on political discourse, or perhaps vice versa.

During the decade before the attacks on the WTC a number of texts of political scientists were

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510   Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse', in R. Young (ed.), *Untying the text: A Post-Structuralist Reader* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1981): 54, 55

produced that could have well served as a basis for the current political discourse. Widely known is Samuel Huntington's 1993 thesis of a "clash of civilizations" where "the central axis of world politics in the future is likely to be... the conflict between "the West and the Rest" and the responses of non-Western civilizations to Western power and values."[511] We see these grand conflicting categories echoed in a central theme of the discourse of the war on terrorism: 'our' values ("freedom and democracy") in confrontation with 'theirs' (those of a vaguely defined 'other': 'terrorists', usually 'Islamic extremists'). Perhaps more surprising for its similarities with Bush's definition of an 'axis of evil' (Iraq, Iran, North Korea) and the justification for a war on Iraq (weapons of mass destruction and an open reference to the threat of terrorism) is the following:

> The conflict between the West and the Confucian-Islamic states focuses largely, although not exclusively, on nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, ballistic missiles and other sophisticated means for delivering them, and the guidance, intelligence and other electronic capabilities for achieving that goal.[512]

More directly related to the study of terrorism, authors writing shortly before, during and shortly after September 11, 2001, clearly portrayed the threat of terrorist groups, specifically al-Qaeda, in catastrophic terms – another constant element of the contemporary discourse of the war on terrorism. In February 2001, Yonah Alexander and Michael S. Swetnam declared "that we have entered into an Age of Super and Cyber Terrorism" and that "perhaps even the survival of civilization itself" would be in question.[513] Similarly, Roland Jacquard wrote in late 2001 that the destruction of the Taliban and al-

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511   Samuel P. Huntington, 'The Clash of Civilizations?' *Foreign Affairs*, 72-3 (Summer 1993): 22

512   Samuel P. Huntington, 'The Clash of Civilizations?': 46

513   Yonah Alexander and Michael S. Swetnam, *Usama bin Laden's al-Qaida: Profile of a Terrorist Network*, (USA:

Qaeda should not make us forget that "the threat remains intact", for the global network persisted thanks to "mysterious financial powers, and no doubt new leaders lurking in the shadows" who could some day master weapons of mass destruction and target "entire cities or countries", in which case "all of humanity would be in grave danger."[514]

After September 11, 2001, we find authors who portray al-Qaeda in identical terms as the dominant discourse. Rohan Gunaratna describes it as "the first multinational terrorist group of the twenty-first century" which "confronts the world with a new kind of threat". Gunaratna's main support for his characterization of Al Qaeda is a series of interviews with "hundreds of terrorists, including Al Qaeda members and government specialists." Indeed, upon examining his references, we often find interviews with US or British intelligence officers, or with Islamic leaders, often anonymous. According to Gunaratna, intelligence specialists had so far thought of terrorist cells acting independently, but that was because we were unaware of how Al Qaeda "cleverly reverted to one-to-one contact, primarily via couriers, as a means of keeping in touch that circumvented governments' technical means of intelligence-gathering". Thus, the reason that the world ignored that Al Qaeda was a worldwide network rather than independent cells appears to be that intelligence services were deceived by personal contacts. He further writes that another reason for the previous misconception was that the name "Al Qaeda" was never used by Osama bin Laden before September 11, 2001, and the group sometimes uses other names. In this way, it keeps us "guessing about its true motives, its true intentions. Al Qaeda maintains its practice of absolute secrecy" even when dealing with allied

Transnational Publishers, 2001): vii

514   Roland Jacquard, *In the Name of Osama bin Laden: Global Terrorism and the Bin Laden Brotherhood*, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002): 142, 158

groups.[515]

The anonymity of the sources, their direct involvement in struggles for political power, their apparent failure to correctly characterize Al Qaeda as a global network before September 11, 2001, and the fact that the true nature of the group is concealed by "absolute secrecy" do not diminish the 'scientific validity' of the overall research because it is assumed that the researcher's sources are *bona fide* and reliable. Therefore, the question about the role that works like this one may fulfil in the preservation of a discourse produced in the context of power, and not of truth, never arises.

In spite of the assumed *will to truth*, Gunaratna manifests a certain degree of scepticism towards the perspectives of history and political science when studying Al Qaeda. They are valuable, he writes, but they "can lead to an underestimation of the phenomenon", for "Al Qaeda is a worldwide movement capable of mobilising a new and hitherto unimagined global conflict".[516] A political scientist would examine the manifestations of the phenomenon within their specific political and social circumstances and a historian would seek to situate them within a historical context. It would be hard to maintain the view that Al Qaeda is capable of global reach and of creating an unprecedented conflict if specificity and the context of history are provided. We discover in Gunaratna's comment, apparently a minor one, a reflection of the reaction of the discourse of the war on terrorism towards a manifest challenge. If left to their own, history and political science may lead to conclusions that would force the discourse to shift one of its major themes: that of the existence of an unprecedented threat.

It is clear, then, that a relationship exists among certain works of research – some considered political

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515   Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002): 1-3

516   Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda*: 1

science – and the discourse of the war on terrorism. What is not evident is if science is exerting pressure on political discourse or if the political is influencing science. Perhaps it is best to think of it as a reciprocal and sinergic relationship where both parts feed on each other.

It is important to notice, however, that there are many other works, also considered of science, and journalistic research, that are critical of the positions summarized above, some diverging in non-essential points but others in stark contradiction. In this sense, and for the case of the war on terrorism, the Foucauldian assumption that all institutionalized science, or the most of its mainstream, supports the discourse is incorrect.

Journalist Jason Burke insists that Al Qaeda "is less an organization than an ideology".[517] While Burke is also assumed to be writing for a *will to truth*, his conclusions are a challenge to the discourse and contrary to Gunaratna's. Al Qaeda, he writes, is not the "fantastically powerful network comprising thousands of trained and motivated men" around the globe that is commonly believed to be.[518] Islamic militants always understood the term *qaeda* in the sense of "precept" or "method", and so when Abdullah Azzam, the chief ideologue of the non-Afghan militants who joined the Mujahideen to fight the Soviets and a spiritual mentor of bin Laden, called for *al-qaeda al-sulbah* (a vanguard of the strong) in 1987, he was referring to a mode of activism, a tactic and an ideal, not an organization. Al Qaeda only evolved into resembling something like an organized group between 1996 and 2001.[519] Even then, writes Burke, it was centred around a small core of only between fifty and a hundred committed militants which provided funding and advice to different groups from all over the Islamic world. But

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517   Jason Burke, 'Al Qaeda', *Foreign Policy* (May/June, 2004): 18
518   Jason Burke, *Al-Qaeda: The True Story of Radical Islam* (UK: Penguin Books, 2004): 1
519   Jason Burke, *Al-Qaeda*: 5

seeing that group "as a coherent and structured terrorist organization with cells everywhere" or containing "all other groups within its networks" would be "to profoundly misconceive its nature and the nature of modern Islamic militancy."[520] The group was not even called Al Qaeda by its own members. "It was the FBI", he writes, "during its investigation of the 1998 U.S. Embassy bombings in East Africa – which dubbed the loosely linked group of activists that Osama bin Laden and his aides had formed as "al Qaeda"."[521] The decision was partly a consequence of institutional conservatism and partly because of the application of conventional antiterrorism laws by the FBI.[522] According to Burke the structure in Afghanistan has been destroyed, bin Laden and his associates have scattered, been arrested or killed. What remains, he writes, is Al Qaeda's worldview, with adherents among many groups. Still, Islamic moderates are the great majority around the world. The labelling of Al-Qaeda subsists, though; with the implication that bin Laden's group is something it is not. Contrary to Gunaratna's skepticism towards history and social science, Burke notes that "the contingent, dynamic and local elements of what is a broad and ill-defined movement rooted in historical trends of great complexity are lost." [523]

However, it should be noted that Burke's account is not entirely alien to the discourse. In his view, the worldview and ideology of Al Qaeda still represent a considerable threat that will remain so "in the years to come".[524] Still, his book remains as one which mostly contradicts the assumptions of the discourse of the war on terrorism.

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520   Jason Burke, *Al-Qaeda*: 6
521   Jason Burke, 'Al Qaeda': 18-20
522   Jason Burke, *Al-Qaeda*: 6, 7
523   Jason Burke, *Al-Qaeda*: 8
524   Jason Burke, *Al-Qaeda*: 18

Authors dealing with the subject of terrorism and Al Qaeda are well aware of the temptation of seeing a confirmation of a 'clash of civilizations'. Many resist it. Peter L. Bergen observes that "superficially", bin Laden seems to fit into Huntington's thesis, but "a closer look shows that his rage is as much directed against one of the most conservative Muslim states in the world – Saudi Arabia – as against the United States"; he adds that many examples of other contemporary conflicts do not occur for cultural differences and that treating Islam "as a monolith" is defying common sense.[525] Even more critical is Noam Chomsky, who describes the designation of the actions of the U.S. as a "war on terrorism" as "simply more propaganda", and the 'clash of civilizations' as "fashionable talk" which "makes little sense".[526]

4.2 *Commentary*

Decades before 2001, the tendency of those who wrote and spoke about terrorism in global terms was to do so in the context of the Cold War. Truly, as noted above the contemporary war on terrorism owes much to the previous one, when the masterminds of global terrorism were mostly suggested to be communists. Commenting on the US discourse on terrorism of the 1980s, Michael Gold-Biss observed a "small but vociferous community of interpretation" (a *society of discourse*) comprising media commentators, policy analysts and scholars, who categorized terrorism as a social actor independent of context and history – recall Gunaratna's scepticism towards political science and history – and assumed that terrorism "was not only novel in terms of its contemporary manifestation", but also in its "mythical destructive proportions". As it is today, terrorism was perceived to be "mostly anti-Western". However, it was also believed to be "pro-revolutionary", and therefore communist. The message of the

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525   Peter L. Bergen, *Holy War Inc., Inside the Secret World of Osama bin Laden*, (Phoenix, 2001): 227, 228
526   Noam Chomsky, *9-11* (Seven Stories Press, 2001): 16, 78

Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism of the Committee of the Judiciary of the United States Senate (1981-1986) was "a simplified version of an imminent apocalypse in which the powers of Evil – the Soviet Union, its sundry allies and sycophant lackeys – clashed with the bastion of Good and Morality – the United States and Western Civilization – over the future of mankind".[527]

Many have noted the parallels between the mentality that prevailed during the Cold War in the US and the current war on terrorism. Some even observe a sort of continuity of such ideology. David Campbell writes:

> What we have, then, is the war on terrorism morphing into a re-run of the Cold War. The Cold War, remember, was both a struggle which exceeded the military threat of the Soviet Union, and a struggle into which any number of potential candidates – regardless of their strategic capacity to be a threat – were slotted as a threat... [T]he sort of struggle the phrase denotes is a struggle over identity: a struggle that is not context-specific and thus not rooted in the existence of a particular kind of threat. But what was distinctive about the Cold War, and what has survived the demise of the Soviet Union, are the long established interpretive dispositions towards the international environment. These involve the zero-sum analyses of international action, the sense of endangerment ascribed to all the activities of the other, the fear of internal challenge and subversion, the tendency to militarize all responses, and the willingness to draw the lines of superiority/inferiority between us and them.
>
> This return of the past means we have different objects of enmity, different allies, but the same

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527   Michael Gold-Biss, *The Discourse on Terrorism*: 2-4, 115

structure for relating to the world through foreign and security policy.[528]

In the same line of reasoning, N.P. Singh comments: "It is almost too obvious to say that *terrorism* now occupies the place and function that *fascism* held in World War II and that *communism* held within the discourse of the cold war."[529] Indeed, some of the themes detected in the text of the discourse appeared in similar form during the Cold War and have never gone away completely. When standing within a Foucauldian perspective we should remain sceptical about any historical explanation that proposes the existence of long term continuity or of a single cause in the past for multiple phenomena in the present. Yet we cannot dismiss the corresponding characteristics that link the US war on terrorism to the Cold War mentality; the former being a *commentary* ("things said once and preserved because it is suspected that behind them there is a secret or a treasure"[530]) of the latter.

Richard Falk wrote at the beginning of the 1990s about the process of legitimating US "terrorism" around the world since 1947. He detected four elements that were necessary to avoid an adverse public opinion in a society with democratic values:

- Cold War mindset: The society needs to be convinced that the public is threatened by "an unscrupulous, powerful, and evil enemy".

- Secrecy, deceit: To avoid criticism, the government relies on secrecy and the manipulation of

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528   David Campbell, 'Time is Broken': 8

529   N. P. Singh, 'Cold War Redux: On the "New Totalitarianism', *Radical History Review*, 85 (2003): 173

530   Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse': 56

information. The CIA operates through covert operations funded by a non-accountable budget; its methods are often indistinguishable from those of terrorist groups condemned for their illegality and immorality.

- Invisible government: The "national security" process is sustained by unelected career bureaucrats with links to the media, the private industry "– even to its criminal underground – and the ultra-right."

- Racism: In order to accept the terrorist acts of the state, its targets have to be dehumanized, portraying them as "fanatical monsters" or "subhuman beings" opposed to national values and way of life.[531]

Compare these elements with the themes that are repeated in the war on terrorism. The Cold War mindset (in the general sense of *'us' vs 'them'*) and racism have already been discussed above. What Falk calls the invisible government is an element comparable to the power relations examined in the previous chapter. The element of secrecy and deceit is discussed at different points in this chapter, mostly through what appear to be cases of the use of 'noble lies'.

It should be added that the producers of the discourse will not always recognize the parallels with the Cold War if it is not convenient for specific purposes. This is what marks the discursive discontinuity and the presence of contradictions – both elements rightly observed by Foucault. Wolfowitz repeatedly argued that the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty negotiated by the Nixon administration no longer made sense because "the world of 2001 is fundamentally different from that of 1972," wondering why more than a decade after the Berlin Wall came down "we are still in some ways… wedded to old Cold War

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531   Richard Falk, 'Terrorist Foundations of US Foreign Policy', in Alexander George (ed.), *Western State Terrorism* (UK: Polity Press, 1991): 113-116

notions of deterrence." Reading from the same script, Bush announced in December 2001 that the US would withdraw from the ABM treaty, because the agreement "was written in a different era, for a different enemy".[532]

Just as the war on terrorism is a *commentary* on the Cold War, the main body of the current discourse constantly resonates and is reproduced by journalists, authors and politicians around the world. Burke, himself a journalist, is aware of the repetition of the message of Al Qaeda as a threat; he attributes this to the reassuring effect that the idea of a single man behind the threat has for the public, to the preference of news editors to "splash a 'bin Laden link' on their front pages", and to political and "more consciously cynical motives too": repressive governments label opponents 'Al-Qaeda' to limit international criticism and to encourage support from the US. Examples of such a shift in local political discourses in the months after September 11, 2001, can be found in China, Macedonia, Tunisia, Philippines,[533] Israel, Russia and Spain.[534]

Similarly, the government and media discourses specific to certain post-911 events, such as the bombings in Madrid and London, are commentaries of the discourse of the Bush administration, and the elements, themes and discursive objects may be easily traced in those cases.

4.3 *Author and Disciplines*

The *author* as a principle where an identity and individuality confer meaning, coherence and

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532   James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*: 313-315

533   Jason Burke, *Al-Qaeda*: 15, 16, 18, 19

534   James Anderson, 'American Hegemony after 11 September: Allies, Rivals and Contradictions', *Geopolitics*, 8-3 (October 2003): 35

truthfulness to a group of texts and messages, finds its most obvious manifestation in US political figures for which the national public has, a great respect and who are in general considered trustworthy for reasons of patriotism or the tradition of institutions. Although the members of the Bush administration have seen their reputations eroded at the end of their second term, *in principle* the president, the vice president and the members of their staff, as living national symbols, step into office exempted from the same degree of natural scepticism that other figures taking part in the public debate would get from the public. The reputation conferred by academic degrees or positions in the media – of which some cases we have already examined above – may also allow actors not directly related to political power to achieve the status of *authors*.

This principle is also closely connected to that of *discipline*, sometimes to the point where they can only be separated by abstraction. The authorities who incarnate the *author* are assumed to hold "a domain of objects, a set of methods, a corpus of propositions considered to be true, a play of rules and definitions, of techniques and instruments".[535] If science is the *discipline* for scholars, then the art of government – which the public assumes to include skills such as leadership, ability to administrate, diplomacy, etc. – is the *discipline* for political authorities. Naturally, the assumption that the *discipline* of government is trustworthy applies for virtually any discourse that springs from most governments around the world, except those going through crises of credibility.

In the case of the US war on terrorism these two principles have had a further specific manifestation in lower levels of authority: those related to intelligence and security. Many basic propositions supporting the discourse are validated by pointing out that the sources possess a *discipline* that qualifies them as

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535   Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse': 59, 60

authors. It is all too common that 'intelligence sources' whose reliability is unquestioned are cited. Most of the times there are few details provided about these sources under the assumption that the work of military or security services will be hindered. The secrecy that this type of information requires makes the situation an opportunity for the abuse of power. Burke observes that in spite of the fact that "intelligence services lie, cheat and deceive"[536],

> a convention seems to have developed whereby something from a 'security source', even if released by politicians, suddenly acquires a degree of reliability. Actually, such material should be treated with extreme circumspection, not exempted from normal journalistic practices. The fact that it cannot be corroborated independently should not be seen as a confirmation of the utility of the information but as the opposite... There are many who have no scruples about disseminating misleading information to achieve their own goals...[537]

The finest examples of the use of sources of intelligence as a sort of validating *discipline* for purposes of power took place in the months preceding the war on Iraq. After the Bush administration repeatedly alleged that war was necessary to disarm a country which had major stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction, and that there was reliable intelligence about the connections between Saddam Hussein and Al-Qaeda, no such weapons were found nor proof of such links. On the contrary, a memo from Downing Street later revealed that "the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy" of removal of Saddam since 2002 and not the other way around, as the public was led to believe. Iraq's weapons capability was really "less than that of Libya, North Korea or Iran".[538] As already noted

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536   Jason Burke, *Al-Qaeda*: 16

537   Jason Burke, *Al-Qaeda*: 18

538   'The Secret Downing Street Memo', *The Sunday Telegraph*, (http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2087-

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above, Wolfowitz admitted in a May 2003 interview with *Vanity Fair* that "for reasons that have a lot to do with the US government bureaucracy we settled on the one issue that everyone could agree on which was weapons of mass destruction as the core reason" for invasion[539], while Khalilzad stated that the administration would not be satisfied without regime change.[540] At the end of March 2006, *The New York Times* cited a confidential British memorandum where President Bush made clear to Prime Minister Tony Blair in January 2003 that he was determined to invade Iraq without a UN resolution and even if arms inspectors failed to find the weapons in the country.[541]

Thus, bureaucrats picked a justification for an invasion that was already decided for a different reason, while it was generally presented as valid information gathered by the *discipline* of intelligence.

4.4 *Ritual*

Gestures, behaviour, circumstances and other signs which accompany the discourse reinforce the strength of the words. Virtually every speech or act performed by the president of the US contains various symbolic elements that empower the text to the point that they become a complete and independent message, sometimes more important than the speech itself.

Bush provided a clear example when in early May 2003 he landed on aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln. The exterior of the jet was marked with "Navy 1" in the back and "George W. Bush Commander-in-Chief" just below the cockpit window. The president got off wearing a green flight suit

1593607,00.html, May 1, 2005)

539   'Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz Interview with Sam Tannenhaus, Vanity Fair'

540   James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*: 348

541   'Bush told Blair determined to invade Iraq without UN resolution or WMD'

and holding a white helmet. He commented that he had taken a turn at piloting the jet. From the tower of the aircraft carrier hung a banner with the words "Mission Accomplished", referring to the Iraq war.[542]

There was no particular reason why Bush should decide to deliver a speech declaring that major combat operations had been completed in Iraq on the deck of a ship off the coast of California, except for the symbolic value of the setting. Had he chosen a more common setting, that day would probably not be remembered as the one on which the war was declared over. It was a strong signal to the media and the public to dismiss future acts of violence in Iraq as exceptional, not worthy of major concern and not threatening the objectives already triumphantly fulfilled ("Mission Accomplished"). The effect of the signal appears to have been resented by both the media and the public after some months when it became clear that instability and violence in Iraq were still constant. The banner was mocked to the point that the White House sought to disavow any connection with it. "I know it was attributed somehow to some ingenious advance man from my staff — they weren't that ingenious, by the way," said Bush; later it was attributed to the crew of the USS Abraham Lincoln itself.[543]

In a more specific context of war on terrorism some procedures are also surrounded by a set of symbols, presumably with the purpose of having a greater effect on the mind of the public. Take the Color-coded Threat Level System of the Homeland Security Advisory System. The threat level may range through "Low" (Green), "Guarded" (Blue), "Elevated" (Yellow), "High" (Orange) and "Severe"

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542   'Commander in Chief Lands on USS Lincoln', *CNN*
(http://www.cnn.com/2003/ALLPOLITICS/05/01/bush.carrier.landing/, May 2, 2003)
543   ''Mission Accomplished' Whodunit: W. House Changes Stories On Much-Mocked Banner At Carrier Speech',
CBS (http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2003/10/29/iraq/main580661.shtml, October 29, 2003)

(Red).[544] Since the system was established in March 2002 the threat level has fluctuated between "yellow" and "orange" with the exception of August 10-13, 2006 for passenger flights from the UK, after British authorities arrested 21 persons under suspicion of plotting to detonate liquid explosives on board multiple commercial airplanes.[545] Leaving considerations about the actual nature of the threat aside, the raising of color-coded level to "red" reinforced the overall theme that the threat of terrorism is real and imminent, even five years after September 11, 2001.

5. Conclusions

The discourse produces terrorism as a discursive object but defines it only vaguely. If we examine it closely, we discover it is essentially based on a status quo definition by not allowing the possibility of Western states to be guilty of this crime. Though written in the 1980s, Noam Chomsky's words still apply here: "it is the other fellow's crimes, not our own comparable or worse ones, that constitute 'terrorism'"; thus, "the concepts of 'terrorism' and 'retaliation' are used as terms of propaganda, not description."[546] However, the discourse also produces, through both declarations and practices, the fear of an unprecedented danger for the innocent population, appealing in this way to a tactical definition and the more common understanding of terrorism, i.e. attacks on civil society. The appeal appears to be

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544   'Threats & Protection: Advisory System', *U.S. Department of Homeland Security* (http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/display?theme=29)

545   'DHS Organization: Chronology of Changes to the Homeland Security Advisory System', U.S. Department of Homeland Security (http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/interapp/editorial/editorial_0844.xml); 'Press Room: Remarks by Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff, United States Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, FBI Director Robert Mueller and Assistant Secretary for TSA Kip Hawley', *U.S. Department of Homeland Security*, (http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/interapp/press_release/press_release_0975.xml, August 10, 2006)

546   Noam Chomsky, 'Middle East Terrorism and the American Ideological System', in Edward Said and Christopher Hitchens (eds.), *Blaming the Victims, Spurious Scholarchip and the Palestinian Question*, (London-New York: Verso, 1988): 119

a justification for changes in policy and law, war and a confrontational posture against certain states, a need for military supremacy and preemption.

A Foucauldian approach is useful for revealing that a discursive object such as terrorism is produced as a 'truth'. However, it falls short in failing to recognize that basic facts and events can and should be considered as objective, even in discourse analysis, for the sake of determining the degree of disproportionality of the discourse and revealing the use of lies. The discourse of the war on terrorism provides several examples of a language disproportionate to the available facts: petty criminals with little chance to successfully do any significant damage to society are presented as dangerous terrorist cells that have been dismantled; Iraq is said to be in possession of weapons of mass destruction and in contact with Al Qaeda, and so on.

Foucaldian theory is again useful when genealogically tracing themes of the discourse of the war on terrorism to previous American discourses of danger, security and identity. However, it does not grant an adequate importance to socio-historical specificities involving people in power, their interests and their particular use of language – all elements which confer the discourse a unique character and represent its historical discontinuity. These specificities reveal the weight of agents in the struggle of power and the production of discourse – adding a complementary dimension to cultural and historic discourses of identity. For example, the interest of the network of power in an international agenda focused on the Middle East and with a relatively little attention to comparable cases, such as North Korea, reveals a specific intentionality that goes beyond the general historical discourse of American identity.

The themes of the discourse are revealed as patterns emerging from the examination of the specificities

of the network of power, their language and practices. This is another limitation of a Foucauldian approach, as it does not recognize practices as integral elements of discourse.

For example, the specificities of the network of power, their language and practices, are all at work in the 'us' vs 'them' divide theme. Bush made a distinction between the 'enemy' and Islam during the first days after September 11, 2001, but he did not reinforce it afterwards. Simultaneously, several commentators were allowed to opine differently by identifying terrorism with Palestinians, Muslims or Arabs, thus linking the fear with certain groups of people; while some practices have also sent a discriminating message by targeting mostly these groups. There is a tendency to demonise Muslims, albeit not always openly. While the tendency is not explicit in every facet of the war on terrorism, it is strong enough to be central and may thus be considered a general subtext. Joel Beinin correctly observes that "September 11 further consolidated an understanding of the world drawing sharp oppositions between "us" and "them", and positing Islam as the "new enemy for a new world order"."[547]

Foucauldian theory turns out to be accurately helpful when showing that the process of the production of the discourse is not limited to a series of statements, whether factually true or not, but is also related to underlying principles manifested in the authority of what is generally considered science, the art of government and the discipline of intelligence gathering; the resonance with historical discourses, such as the Cold War; and the symbols and rituals that accompany the messages.

While chapters 2 and 3 have identified the network of power and the themes and production of the

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547   Joel Beinin, 'The Israelization of American Middle East Policy Discourse': 125

discourse, as well as the relevance and limitations of a Foucauldian approach; chapters 4 and 5 each focus on two further aspects of discourse while still assessing Foucault's work. Chapter 4 examines discourse as practices related to biopolitics and Giorgio Agamben's notion of bare life; while the subject of chapter 5 is the confrontation of the hegemonic discourse with the constitutive outside – a pertinent concept borrowed from Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe.

Chapter 4

Biopolitics, Rendering of Bare Life and the Panoptical Principle as Elements of the Discourse of the War on Terrorism

1. Analyzing practices as part of the discourse

In the previous two chapters I have argued in favour of a discourse analysis that focuses on socio-historical and political specificities in regards to people and groups of power, their geopolitical and ideological agendas, their concrete actions and use of language, and the contrast with the actual facts to which they make reference in order to assess the degree of disproportionality of the discourse. This is not the method that Foucault would have used. But to be fair, we should make clear that there is a sense in which Foucault was also concerned with social and historical specificities. In fact, he claimed to be 'an empiricist', and a great deal of his texts deal with concrete history.[548] As I have noted earlier, the difference is that he concentrated on the procedures, institutions, techniques and strategies of power that permeated a society and its mentality; for example, the way in which the inmates of a prison, a hospital or a factory were disciplined in order to maximize the efficiency of their control.

At first sight, it would appear that it is possible to reduce practices to discourse (or viceversa) with Foucault, given that in his view the power of language is linked to external, material and tactical forms of power. This is why power cannot be fixed or apprehended in the meanings of texts, but must be grasped and traced through the analysis of tactical and material relations of force. Discourse itself may

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548   Jan Selby, 'Engaging Foucault: Discourse, Liberal Governance and the Limits of Foucauldian IR', International Relations, 21 (2007): 328

take material forms, and be 'embodied' in various kinds of practice. The analysis of these material and extra-textual practised forms of powers should be involved within a Foucauldian methodology, emphasizing both text and context.[549] However, in his empiricism Foucault distanced himself from Jacques Derrida, who would contend that 'there is nothing outside the text' and thus concentrated on meanings, ruptures and inconsistencies internal to texts.[550] Foucault's empiricism was based on the extra-discursive, and thus denied that everything could be reduced to text. He was hostile towards Derrida's "reduction of discursive practices to textual traces",[551] and was more interested in the question of power than issues of language, arguing that

> one's point of reference should not be to the great model of language [*langue*] and signs, but to that of war and battle. The history which bears and determines us has the form of a war rather than that of a language: relations of power, not relations of meaning.[552]

If one is to take Foucault's idea of discourse strictly and accept that it is composed of a set of historical and paradigmatic assumptions and rules that determine even how we objectify things, then it would naturally follow that 'there is nothing outside the text' indeed. It appears that his difference with Derrida is not of an essential nature but rather one of stressing certain issues over others. Foucault preferred to read relations of power before language and signs, i.e. relations of meaning, but he did not deny that power and discourse were intimately related; on the contrary. Thus, Derrida's preference for language

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549   Derek Hook, 'Discourse, Knowledge, Materiality, History: Foucault and Discourse Analysis', *Theory & Psychology*, 11-4 (2001): 529, 530.

550   Jan Selby, 'Engaging Foucault': 328
551   Jan Selby, 'Engaging Foucault': 328
552   Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972-1977* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980): 114 , quoted in Jan Selby, 'Engaging Foucault: Discourse, Liberal Governance and the Limits of Foucauldian IR', International Relations, 21 (2007): 328

does not logically contradict the essential Foucault, but complements him.[553]

In any case, if we accept Foucault's distinction between relations of meaning and the extra-discursive, such as practices, this chapter, like the previous one, departs again from Foucault in its analysis of the war on terrorism. In regards to the latter, I intend to analyse biopolitics and other related practices as part of the discourse. I do not propose as a matter of principle that *everything* can or should be reduced to discourse. But I do believe that our understanding of the discourse of the war on terrorism increases if we read some of its practices as a complementary part of the discourse, and as such, carrying a meaning and message.

As has been pointed out in previous chapters, in this respect this analysis is closer to Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, who reject the distinction between the discursive and the non-discursive, and insist on "the interweaving of the semantic aspects of language with the pragmatic aspects of actions, movements and objects." As Jacob Torfing explains, "discourse is co-extensive with the social and cannot be reduced to either its semantic or its pragmatic aspects. All actions have meaning, and to produce and disseminate meaning is to act."[554]

What follows in this chapter is an examination of certain practices of the war on terrorism – those

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553   In his defense, Derrida explained: "what I call 'text' implies all the structures called 'real', 'economic', 'historical', socio-institutional, in short: all possible referents. Another way of recalling once again that 'there is nothing outside text'. That does not mean that all referents are suspended, denied, or enclosed in a book, as people have claimed, or have been naive enough to believe and to have accused me of believing. But it does mean that every referent, all reality, has the structure of a differential trace, and that one cannot refer to this 'real' except in an interpretive experience. The latter neither yields meaning nor assumes it except in a movement of differential referring. That's all." Derrida, 1988a: 148, cited in Jacob Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe and Zizek* (UK: Blackwell, 1999): 94

554   Jacob Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse*: 94

related to the management and manipulation of human life, including the extreme form of torture –
through the lens of the concept of biopolitics, the idea of sovereignty as the power to render bare life,
and the principle of the Panopticon as a disciplinary technique, while considering these practices as
essential elements of the discourse of the war on terrorism without which it could not be properly
understood. In doing so, I wish to show once again that a number of contributions of Foucault are
relevant for the case, but they fall short of revealing important aspects of the discourse, while the
complementary work of others – in this case, mostly that of Giorgio Agamben – provide the answers.

While the roles of biopolitics, bare life and surveillance have already been considered by other
contemporary authors within the context of the war on terrorism, here I seek to add the dimension of
discourse: to assess these practices as a message. Following Ferdinand de Saussure, the neo-
Gramscians Laclau and Mouffe argue that each element of a discourse, conceptual or practical, lacks
intrinsic meaning unless placed next to other elements that define it. Meaning is therefore a function of
difference, and therefore unstable in principle and subject to change according to variation in structures
of difference. In agreement with this principle, Laclau and Mouffe adopt and modify Antonio Gramsci's
concept of hegemony to denote the structuring of meanings through discursive practices. For Gramsci,
hegemony was the capacity of a class to transcend its narrow interests in order to symbolise a variety of
popular struggles that were external to class or economic practices. Laclau and Mouffe take the idea of
hegemony as "an 'articulatory practice' that 'sutures' concepts and practices around key principles such
that certain elements come to be viewed as 'naturally' related or contiguous."[555] Likewise, this chapter
seeks to identify the derived meaning that emerges from practices when they are understood next to the
overall language of the war on terrorism.

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555   James Martin, 'The political logic of discourse: a neo-Gramscian view', *History of European Ideas* 28 (2002): 24

That a new meaning emerges does not mean that there is a discursive intentionality in the case of the war on terrorism from those directly responsible for these practices, or that the population understands them as such. It does mean, however, that the message does take place; that an exchange of information with the population occurs; that the message becomes an element of the discourse; and that the phenomena can be analysed in order to make the message explicit and improve our understanding of the discourse.

When adding the pragmatic dimension we can identify different layers within the discourse. On October 17, George W. Bush signed the 2006 Military Commissions Act, which provides a more clear legal framework for trying non-US citizens deemed to be "unlawful enemy combatants". It denies habeas corpus rights to detainees who have not been charged with any offence. While the US government has issued numerous statements that its military personnel must not use torture, the evidence shows that some of the officially sanctioned practices in the war on terrorism – especially as applied by certain US intelligence personnel – have amounted to torture.[556] Thus, there are at least three levels of discourse to be considered: the statements, the legal framework and the actual practices. The chapter focuses on the last one and includes some elements of the legal changes because they are directly related to the practices and may even be considered practices themselves.

Again, we must not forget that all three levels are linked and confer new meaning on each other. In a mid-August 2003 email a captain in military intelligence says of detainees classified as unprivileged belligerents: "we want these individuals broken. Casualties are mounting and we need to start gathering

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556   Adam Roberts, 'Review Essay: Torture and Incompetence in the 'War on Terror'', *Survival*, 49-1 (Spring 2007): 200

info to help protect our fellow soldiers from any further attacks."[557] As this email became public it became part of the text of the discourse, albeit unintentionally. A memorandum sent from the Justice Department to the White House on 1 August 2002, which had to be withdrawn in 2004, "stood the plain meaning of words on their head when it redefined 'torture' to allow a huge range of cruel and inhuman treatment to escape the definitional net of US and international legislation. It also strained belief when it stated that the president had total and unfettered discretion to ensure that prisoners were effectively interrogated, even to the point of authorising torture".[558] It is possible to analyse the practices as a consequence of the use of language; this route of enquiry has been explored by others.[559] This chapter takes an alternative route by assuming that practices are already a message and part of the discourse and by trying to determine what its content is.

2. Biopolitics and Bare Life: Foucault and Agamben

By biopolitics Michel Foucault meant "the endeavour, begun in the eighteenth century, to rationalize the problems presented to governmental practice by the phenomena characteristic of a group of living human beings constituted as a population: health, sanitation, birthrate, longevity, race..." He noted that these problems have occupied an expanding place since the nineteenth century, constituting political and economic issues up to the present day. The framework of political rationality was linked to liberalism, considered not as an ideology or a theory, but as a "way of doing things": a principle and a method of rationalizing the exercise of government which obeys the rule of maximum economy.[560] This

557   Adam Roberts, 'Review Essay: Torture and Incompetence in the 'War on Terror'': 201

558   Adam Roberts, 'Review Essay: Torture and Incompetence in the 'War on Terror'': 203

559   Richard Jackson examines language as a cause of political violence in *Writing the war on terrorism: Language, Politics and Counter-Terrorism*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005)

560   Michel Foucault, 'The Birth of Biopolitics', in Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (eds.), *The Essential Foucault,*

practice consists of mechanisms, techniques, and technologies of power.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, these techniques emerged around the human body involving the spatial distribution, organization, serialization and surveillance of individual bodies in order to increase their productive force while rationalizing and economizing power to be used in the least costly way possible. This was a system of surveillance, hierarchies, inspections, bookkeeping and reports: a disciplinary technology of labor. In the second half of the eighteenth century appeared a new technology of power which integrated discipline. But unlike discipline, this was not applied to human bodies as much as human beings as a species. The new technology affected a mass of multiplicity of people through the overall processes characteristic of birth, death, production, illness, and the like. Discipline was "in an individualizing mode", while the new technology was "massifying, that is directed not at man-as-body but at man-as-species". If discipline was the anatomo-politics of the human body, the new technique was a "biopolitics" of the human race, involving "a set of processes such as the ratio of births to deaths, the rate of reproduction, the fertility of a population, and so on." Death, epidemics, hygiene, accidents, insurance and the urban problem were some of the starting points of biopolitics[561], and its object a population conceived as a scientific and political problem.[562]

In the nineteenth century, Foucault writes, sovereignty's traditional right of taking life or letting live was complemented by a new right which penetrated and permeated the old one: the power to "make" live and "let" die.[563] Biopolitics arrived with the transformation in waging war from the defence of the

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Selections from The Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984 (New York-London: The New Press, 1994; 2003): 202

561   Michel Foucault, *Society Must be Defended, Lectures at the College de France, 1975-1976* (New York: Picador): 241-244, 255

562   Katia Genel, 'The Question of Biopower: Foucault and Agamben', *Rethinking Marxism*, 18-1 (January 2006): 46

563   Michel Foucault, *Society Must be Defended*, p. 241

sovereign to securing the existence of a population. From then on, according to Foucault, decisions to fight and kill were made in terms of collective survival and preserving life.[564] The sovereign "right of the sword", was then simply one element among other forms of power. It was organized within a power of management of life as the scientific possibility of transforming life, not only for its value to capitalism as labour, but also as well-being or health. Too many things lay outside the traditional mechanism of the power of sovereignty, both at the level of the detail and of the mass. Discipline was the first adjustment to take care of this; the second adjustment was that of biopolitics, which was more difficult as it implied complex systems of coordination and centralization.[565]

An implication of biopolitics is that its techniques allow for the practice of 'government at a distance', and a 'governmentalisation of the State', where the state becomes oriented primarily to managing and regulating populations.[566] The community appears as a technical device for its own management. Nowadays, local governments of Western countries attempt to regulate not only life and death, but even the movements and interactions of citizens by spatial arrangements. Techniques include loud classical music played at the entrances of railway stations to chase away drug addicts and homeless people; at subway stations, a lack of toilets or benches, and so on.[567] It has also been observed that even the emergence of non-state actors such as international organisations and NGOs is related to the expansion of biopolitics in different contexts, such as war.[568]

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564   David Campbell, 'The Biopolitics of Security: Oil, Empire, and the Sports Utility Vehicle', in Elizabeth Dauphinee and Cristina Masters (eds.), *The Logics of Biopower and the War on Terror; Living, Dying, Surviving* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007): 134

565   Katia Genel, 'The Question of Biopower: Foucault and Agamben': 46

566   Jan Selby, 'Engaging Foucault': 334

567   Christian Borch, 'Crime Prevention as Totalitarian Biopolitics', *Journal of Scandinavian Studies in Criminology and Crime Prevention*, 6 (2005): 100

568   Julian Reid, 'The Biopolitics of the War on Terror: a critique of the 'return of imperialism' thesis in international

Foucault was interested in analyzing mechanisms and rationalities of governance under conditions of formal freedom or the type of social control which is characteristic of liberal societies.[569] Thus, if we were to adopt a Foucauldian approach, the concept of biopolitics as a practice of liberal rationality would seem to be a useful starting point to examine certain practices of the war on terrorism. However, it is insufficient when we find examples of extreme practices on human life, such as torture. The problem is that torture is not expected to naturally occur in conditions of formal freedom or in liberal societies. Quite correctly, Jan Selby writes:

> It is this specific concern with liberal societies which in my view explains why Foucault paid such scant attention to what Giorgio Agamben has argued is the exemplary form of modern bio-political governance, the concentration camp: Foucault was much less interested in situations of coercive and totalitarian control, than in power relations which operated within the context of, and through, freedom.[570]

Giorgio Agamben has explored and extended the notion of biopolitics by arguing that the defence of life often takes place in a zone of indistinction between violence and the law: the camp, the fundamental biopolitical paradigm of the West. The paradox is that the privileging of life has provided the rationale for some cases of genocide, as one group's life is violently secured through the demise of another.[571]

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relations', *Third World Quarterly*, 26-2 (2005): 246

569   Jan Selby, 'Engaging Foucault': 331

570   Jan Selby, 'Engaging Foucault': 331

571   David Campbell, 'The Biopolitics of Security': 134; Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer, Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995): 181

According to Agamben, the threads of research concerning political techniques and sovereign power, and the other concerning the technologies of the self, are intertwined at several points.[572] He writes:

> The present inquiry concerns precisely this hidden point of intersection between the juridico-institutional and the biopolitical models of power. What this work has had to record among its likely conclusions is precisely that the two analyses cannot be separated, and that the inclusion of bare life in the political realms constitutes the original – if concealed – nucleus of sovereign power. *It can even be said that the production of a biopolitical body is the original activity of sovereign power*. In this sense, biopolitics is at least as old as the sovereign exception. Placing biological life at the center of its calculations, the modern State therefore does nothing other than bring to light the secret tie uniting power and bare life, thereby reaffirming the bond (derived from a tenacious correspondence between the modern and the archaic which one encounters in the most diverse spheres) between modern power and the most immemorial of the *arcane imperii*.[573]

For Agamben, the logic of sovereignty is that of production and isolation of "bare life" as an exception, life that can be killed but not sacrificed.[574] By examining a legal form of Roman law he identifies the concept of bare life with "sacred life". The sacredness of life "originally expressed precisely both life's subjection to a power over death and life's irreparable exposure in the relation of abandonment." [575]

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572   Katia Genel, 'The Question of Biopower: Foucault and Agamben': 50

573   Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer*: 6; Italics in the original.

574   Katia Genel, 'The Question of Biopower: Foucault and Agamben': 43; Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer*

575   Roxanne Lynn Doty, 'Crossroads of Death', in Elizabeth Dauphinee and Cristina Masters (eds.), *The Logics of Biopower and the War on Terror; Living, Dying, Surviving* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007): 13

The production of bare life is the originary activity of sovereignty. Agamben argues that since the beginning of Western patriarchal politics, there has been a distinction between bare life, or the life of the home, and politically qualified life, the life of the polis or public sphere. The life excluded from politics is a life that can be killed without that killing constituting murder – though it was necessary for politics, so that the political community could be constituted as bounded and sovereign.

Agamben detects in contemporary sovereign politics an increase of the "state of exception", in which bare life no longer remains on the margins, but occupies all the spaces of politics when it became biopolitics. All life became bare life at this point. This has happened increasingly everywhere since the Nazi camps.[576] He "intends to reveal the mobility of the biopolitical caesuras that endlessly separate and exclude one life – that of the Jews – in order to reinforce and to cause another life – that of the Germans – to emerge from it."[577] Foucault also noted the Nazi genocide's relation to biopolitics in the sense of one race of people killing another for its own alleged preservation. However, Agamben deviates from Foucault in two points. First, he believes that biopower and killing, which coincide with one another with the Nazis, are indissociable, while they remain heterogenous in Foucault's analysis. Second, extermination is not the exclusive paradigm by which to grasp Nazism; it is the production of bare life that can explain this double process. To the extent that the logic of the production of bare life leads to killing, the concentration camp is linked to the extermination camp.[578]

Agamben's analysis is foreign to Foucault in that he is bound to a power and its logic rather than to the plurality of its mechanisms. In this respect, if an examination of discourse refers to something with a

576   Jenny Edkins, 'Missing Persons: Manhattan, September 2001', in Elizabeth Dauphinee and Cristina Masters (eds.) *The Logics of Biopower and the War on Terror; Living, Dying, Surviving* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007): 37

577   Katia Genel, 'The Question of Biopower: Foucault and Agamben': 55, 56

578   Katia Genel, 'The Question of Biopower: Foucault and Agamben': 55, 56

meaning common to the multiplicity of practices, the observations in this chapter are closer to Agamben than Foucault. Katia Genel observes that for Agamben, "biopower is nothing other than the deployment of the structure of sovereignty in the form of the crisis. Agamben constitutes it as a paradigm rather than locating, as Foucault has done, the discontinuities and historical transformations of the way in which power is exercised".[579] Agamben's focus on the power of sovereignty is central for the argument about discourse presented in here, although I do not believe this contradicts Foucault's approach.[580]

3. Sending a message through practices

The Abu Ghraib scandal, brought to public knowledge by journalist Seymour M. Hersh in 2004 after gaining access to an Army report which described "sadistic, blatant, and wanton criminal abuses",[581] provided several graphic icons of the sharpest contradictions of the war in Iraq and the war on terrorism. Shocking photographs of detainees being humiliated, beaten and tortured were published in

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579   Katia Genel, 'The Question of Biopower: Foucault and Agamben': 58

580   For an alternative interpretation of the biopolitics of the war on terror see Michael Dillon, 'Governing Terror: The State of Emergency of Biopolitical Emergence', *International Political Sociology*, 1(2007): 7-28. Dillon argues that the war on terror "emerged out of a generic biopolitics of contingency in the west, and is being conducted according to its political technologies and governmental rationalities, as much as it was precipitated by a contingent terroristic event directed at the epicenter of geopolitical hegemony in the United States". (p. 8) Dillon explicitly rejects the notion that the state of emergency of this century is as described by Carl Schmitt or Giorgio Agamben. Rather, he argues that biopolitics have adopted the contingent as their principle of formation, where life is understood by Dillon as constant nonlinear adaptation and change. In this sense, he characterizes biopolitics as encompassing lifelike systems, thus blurring the line between the organic and the inorganic. Apart from the arguable expansion from a traditional notion of biopolitics, Dillon's argument may explain certain practices such as surveillance but falls short for the analysis of torture. Indeed, torture as a display of overwhelming power (domination) begs for Agamben's analysis on sovereignty and bare life.

581   Seymour M. Hersh, 'Torture at Abu Ghraib: American soldiers brutalized Iraqis. How far does the responsibility go?', *The New Yorker* (http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2004/05/10/040510fa_fact, May 10, 2004)

the world media. Perhaps the best recognized pictures – yet not the ones reflecting the most brutal practices – are those of Specialist Lynndie England holding on a leash a naked prisoner lying on the ground and of detainee Satar Jabar standing on a box with wires connected to his body. Although the Army report was not meant for publication, a message took place, even if unintended, between those who hold sovereign power to render bare life and the world population at large, and became embedded in the discourse. The message was not delivered through words as much through practices and their graphic evidence, and its content was the affirmation and the reminder of the power of the sovereign to dispose of human life at will, to render bare life and to create exceptional spaces of indistinction between law and violence. In this way, the theme of the exceptional power of the sovereign becomes a subtext of the discourse of the war on terrorism.

Other examples stand next to Abu Ghraib. Amnesty International points out that hundreds of people are held in Guantanamo Bay, the US naval base leased from Cuba which since 2002 has been used for military detention camps for the imprisonment of suspected members of al Qaeda and the Taliban, "in conditions which may amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment". In a recent report the organisation estimates that 70,000 people have been detained outside the US in the context of the war on terrorism. It reports on evidence of stress positions, isolation, hooding, sensory deprivation, the use of dogs, cruel and prolonged use of shackles, the use of loud music and strobe lights.[582]

Acts of torture are of course more than the affirmation of the rights of the sovereign. Most obviously

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582   David Mutimer, 'Sovereign Contradictions: Maher Arar and the Indefinite Future', in Elizabeth Dauphinee and Cristina Masters (eds.), *The Logics of Biopower and the War on Terror; Living, Dying, Surviving* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007): 161, 162

perhaps, they are acts of humiliation.[583] Beyond torture, it has been argued that the Bush administration's desire to humiliate is the reason why there was never a legal approach to the war on terrorism (as in pursuing criminals as opposed to declaring a war), for courts would deliver justice, but not "vengeance and counterhumiliation". Paul Saurette writes: "from this perspective, the attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq served not only military purposes, but psychological ones as well, for what was the implicit message behind the willingness to go in alone without the UN's approval?" Whether consciously intended by policy makers or not, there is indeed an implicit act of communication whenever the US government goes beyond legal or moral boundaries.[584] The enemy and the 'other' are humiliated, but a lesser sense of humiliation is extended to anyone who demanded or expected restraint from US authorities.

Saurette believes that the desire to humiliate explains tactics of the war on terrorism: the military strategy of shock and awe sent a message: "You who have humiliated us will in turn be shocked and humiliated by our power. You, and the rest of the world, will then feel awe at our power and thus respect us because we have humiliated you"; the prohibition of pictures of dead US soldiers had the purpose of avoiding humiliation of their own pretension of invulnerability; the release of pictures of the dead sons of Saddam Hussein and of the former dictator hiding in a hole had the purpose of humiliating them as less than human; and the acts of Abu Ghraib were a reproduction in the micro level of the same dynamics.[585] If Saurette's assumption is correct, then sending messages through such practices was an objective rather than an accident. It remains as an interesting assumption, though, since we cannot know with certainty how much was intended or not.

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583   Paul Saurette, 'Humiliation and the Global War on Terror', *Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice*, 17 (2005): 48, 49

584   Paul Saurette, 'Humiliation and the Global War on Terror': 52

585   Paul Saurette, 'Humiliation and the Global War on Terror': 52, 53

The message towards the masses is comparable to what takes place in a micro level between the torturer and the tortured. Just as the physical pain of torture "is so incontestably real that it seems to confer its quality of "incontestable reality" on that power that has brought it into being," [586] the shock of the images of Abu Ghraib and the reports from Guantanamo confer "reality" on the war on terrorism and the power of those who wage it. Just as the necessity for torture is precisely that the reality of that power is so highly contestable,[587] practices that do not respect the boundaries are needed for the war on terrorism for it to be affirmed as urgent.

Elaine Scarry has described the nature of torture as "repeated acts of display" having as its purpose "the production of a fantastic illusion of power", making it "a grotesque piece of compensatory drama."[588] If drama is part of the essence of torture, then the images and reports of torture released in the global media become a vehicle of dramatization for the war on terrorism – again, whether purposely or not. The world's knowledge of the horrors of Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo has enhanced the effect of torture as a drama of power. Particularly the case of Abu Ghraib, for being so graphic, translated human suffering into "an emblem of the regime's strength", to borrow Scarry's expression.

> The translation is made possible by, and occurs across, the phenomenon common to both power and pain: agency. The electric generator, the whips and canes, the torturer's fists, the walls, the doors, the prisoner's sexuality, the torturer's questions, the institution of medicine, the prisoner's screams, his wife and children, the telephone, the chair, a trial, a submarine, the prisoner's ear

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586   Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*, (New York-Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985): 27

587   Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain*: 27

588   Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain*: 27, 28

drums – all these and many more, everything human and inhuman that is either physically or verbally, actually or allusively present, has become part of the glutted realm of weaponry, weaponry that can refer equally to pain or power. [...] Now, at least for the duration of this obscene and pathetic drama, it is not the pain but the regime that is incontestably real, not the pain but the regime that is able to eclipse all else, not the pain but the regime that is able to dissolve the world.[589]

If the agents of torture (or similar types of shocking practices) are needed for the regime to affirm its reality, it is reasonable to consider that the same logic of power facilitated that at least part of what was taking place in Iraq should be known.

As horrific acts, the messages behind these practices are not easily translated into words. However, when attempting to do so, Agamben's notion of *homo sacer* – the sacred man – comes to mind: "*Life that cannot be sacrificed and yet may be killed is sacred life.*"[590] Agamben borrows the notion of *homo sacer* from archaic Roman law. It is an obscure figure whose life was considered by the juridical order only because of its capacity to be killed.[591] This is directly connected to the power of the sovereign and its sphere, "*the sphere in which it is permitted to kill without committing homicide and without celebrating a sacrifice, and sacred life… is the life that has been captured in this sphere.*"[592] Is it not reasonable then that Agamben has desciphered with these words the message behind shocking acts of taking life without committing murder, or torturing it by extension? Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo, going to war without the consent of the UN Security Council and other practices and actions of US authorities

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589   Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain*: 56

590   Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer*: 82. Italics in the original.

591   Roxanne Lynn Doty, 'Crossroads of Death': 13, 14

592   Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer*: 83. Italics in the original.

are exceptional; the structure of the exception, according to Agamben, is the sovereign ban, and what is caught in this ban is life that can be killed but not sacrificed, "in this sense, the production of bare life is the originary activity of sovereignty." Thus, the medium becomes the message: by showing their ability to exceptionally dispose of human life, the wagers of the war on terrorism state their sovereignty.[593] Through the violence of the processes by which bare life is excluded, a biopolitical body is produced on which sovereign power can exercise its power, which is perpetrated through the *gesture* of exception. Genel explains:

> (T)he state of exception is precisely what is going to generate a certain visibility, to make what is hidden emerge. It is from this perspective that the camp will be analyzed: the hidden face of power, the locus in which the exception is operative, is revealed in the crisis situation, either in the exceptional situation or ultimately in the camp.[594]

Other events of less graphic nature have contributed to the message. The creation of exceptional laws and their application have not been strictly limited to the space of prisoner camps. Administration lawyers concluded in a March 2003 Defence Department legal memorandum that the president is not bound by either an international treaty prohibiting torture nor by a federal antitorture law because he has the authority as commander in chief to approve any technique needed to protect the nation's security. After the memo was described in newspaper reports the Bush administration disavowed it. Former White House counsel, Alberto Gonzales, assured that it was not relied upon by policy-makers.[595] Backing off the memorandum and condemning the practices of Abu Ghraib may have

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593   Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer*: 83

594   Katia Genel, 'The Question of Biopower: Foucault and Agamben': 52

595   Joel D. Aberbach, 'The Political Significance of the George W. Bush Administration', Social Policy &

somehow obscured the effect of the message but not entirely cancelled it, as repeated practices speak stronger than words. In the end sum of the contradictions between reports of practices and their denial, what remains is the notion of the prevalence and reach of the power of the sovereign.

It shouldn't be surprising then that citizen's rights and social contracts are overlooked since "only bare life is authentically political" from the point of view of sovereignty. Agamben sees this as the reason for Hobbes to seek the foundation of sovereignty "not in the subjects' free renunciation of their natural right but in the sovereign's preservation of his natural right to do anything to anyone, which now appears as the right to punish".[596] The paradox of sovereignty is that the sovereign is simultaneously outside and inside the juridical order. Commenting on Carl Schmitt, Agamben observes that while juridical order grants to the sovereign the power to proclaim a state of exception of the juridical order, then the sovereign "legally places himself outside the law." The paradox may be expressed this way: "I, the sovereign, who am outside the law, declare that there is nothing outside the law."[597] Thus, while Amnesty International complains about the US using the language of human rights while violating human rights, it "can have it both ways precisely because of the operation of sovereign power that is at the same time the law and above the law."[598]

In the case of the war on terrorism the right of doing anything to anyone is claimed not so much in its own territory but beyond the frontiers of the US, as the focus of the punishment are the Arab and Muslim people. When considering the targeting of another group of people, the role of biopolitics in its

Administration, 39-2 (April 2005): 144

596   Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer*: 106

597   Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer*: 15

598   Cristina Masters, 'Body Counts: The biopolitics of Death', in Elizabeth Dauphinee and Cristina Masters (eds.), *The Logics of Biopower and the War on Terror; Living, Dying, Surviving* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007): 53

extreme form is revealed in traits of totalitarianism.

As Agamben sees biopolitics in the extreme, genocides such as that of the Jews by the Nazis were not a punishment nor a sacrifice, but the killing of bare life ("as lice", in Hitler's words); thus, the dimension of the killing was neither religion nor law, but biopolitics.[599] The two traits that characterize totalitarianism are the power to decide on the value or non-value of life and biological facts becoming political facts. For Agamben, the genocidal phenomenon that characterized Nazism is intelligible from the biological dimension.[600]

In this Agamben follows Foucault closely. Foucault argues that racism, after emerging in the sixteenth century as a discourse which he calls "race wars",[601] is the basic mechanism of power in modern states that allows the sovereign power to kill in a society ever more characterized by biopolitics, which takes life as its objective. The result is that "the modern state can scarcely function without becoming involved with racism at some point, within certain limits and subject to certain conditions." Racism becomes necessary to determine "what must live and what must die."[602] It is compatible with the exercise of biopower: it establishes a relationship between one's own life and the death of the other in a biological-type relationship; therefore the "inferior race" is not killed only to eliminate a threat, but also to "make life in general healthier: healthier and purer".[603]

David Mutimer has suggested that the war on terrorism is the most recent expression of the racist

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599   Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer*: 114

600   Katia Genel, 'The Question of Biopower: Foucault and Agamben': 55

601   David Mutimer, 'Sovereign Contradictions': 166

602   Michel Foucault, *Society Must be Defended*: 254

603   Michel Foucault, *Society Must be Defended*: 255

discourse that allows for sovereignty and biopolitics to function together in one of its most virulent articulations.[604] He writes:

> The discourse of the war on terror, while not explicitly racist in the Nazi sense is extensively racialized. It has articulated its enemy as people identifiable not just by their religion, as important as that obviously is to their representation, but more particularly by their (racial) appearance. Whether it is the often discussed "racial profiling," or the pervasive, everyday association of Islamist terrorists with the features of Arabs, the war on terror has produced a global discourse more racist than any we have seen since the time of European colonialism.[605]

In most of its spoken and written language the war on terrorism denies racism and embraces opposite values, yet related practices tell a different story. The overlapping of two contrasting levels of message does not result in the cancellation of either, but in the confusion and paradoxical mixture of both. By torturing and killing people while speaking of equal rights and universal values the resulting suggested idea is that the sovereign state could do this to anyone, even if for the moment it is only to members of the 'other race'. This is a new message which appears by the combination of the explicit discourse and the discourse composed by acts of torture, killing and arbitrariness.

For Foucault, a normalizing society is at least superficially a biopower, and as such, "racism is the indispensable precondition that allows someone to be killed, that allows others to be killed. Once a State functions in the biopower mode, racism alone can justify the murderous function of the state".[606]

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604   David Mutimer, 'Sovereign Contradictions': 168, 169
605   David Mutimer, 'Sovereign Contradictions': 172, 173
606   Michel Foucault, *Society Must be Defended*: 256

Though it is true that racism plays an important role in the early stages of genocide, Foucault does not explain how systematic murder can be expanded in later phases to members of the race purported to be defended. Furthermore, while he recognizes that only rarely has the discourse of race wars been expressed in an overtly racial fashion,[607] he does not explicitly ask what is the significance of the contradiction of a society engaging in practices with a racist undertone while at the same time declaring that it embraces the opposite values, and what the result of this contradiction may be (that such a contradiction is possible is due to the fact that modern racism is not bound up with mentalities, ideologies or the lies of power, but with the technique of power.[608] This is comparable to, and explained by, the contradiction between sovereignty and biopolitics, where sovereignty allows the state to kill its people, while biopolitics demands that those same people be made to live.[609]) When the official discourse is not racist while torture and killing occur in semi-visibility and almost exclusively targeting another race, the door opens for the idea that the sovereign State can indeed torture and kill anyone, even if for the moment it does only others.

Foucault did take note of Nazism taking the play between the sovereign right to kill and the mechanisms of biopower to the paroxysmal point where "exposing the entire population to universal death was the only way it could truly constitute itself as a superior race and bring about its definitive regeneration once other races had been either exterminated or enslaved forever." While not taken to the extreme of Nazism, this play, he believes, is in fact inscribed in the workings of many modern states, both capitalist and socialist.[610] Thus, in every case of authorities relaxing their intolerance towards torture or indiscriminate killing we find the potential of universal death.

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607   David Mutimer, 'Sovereign Contradictions': 172, 173
608   Michel Foucault, *Society Must be Defended*: 258
609   David Mutimer, 'Sovereign Contradictions: Maher Arar and the Indefinite Future': 168
610   Michel Foucault, *Society Must be Defended*: 259-261

3.1 *Emergency and exception as normalcy*

Implicit within the sovereign power of rendering bare life is the power to declare exception of the law, but also exception in terms of emergency. Parallel to the paradox of sovereign power being at the same time the law and above the law we find the paradox that the exceptional and the emergency may become norm.

The exception is not a simple state of chaos but a kind of exclusion which always maintains itself in relation to the rule "in no longer applying, in withdrawing from it". While the sovereign suspension is a zone of indistinction between nature and right, it presupposes the juridical order in the form of its suspension.[611] Agamben reasons that the exception is the structure of sovereignty, and as such it is not an exclusively political and juridical concept, but "the originary structure in which law refers to life and includes it in itself by suspending it."[612] This is relevant because the war on terrorism, based on a discourse of danger and emergency, has proven the ability of the sovereign to make exceptions and by doing so it affirms and normalizes its own power.

Making and creating exceptions would probably not be possible without the discourse of threat. It also allows for preventive intervention, for every danger may in some sense evolve into crime[613] or tragedy, and for disciplinary social measures. Foucault illustrates by commenting on the plague-stricken town:

[A]gainst an extraordinary evil, power is mobilized; it makes itself everywhere present and

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611   Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer*: 17, 18, 21
612   Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer*: 28
613   Christian Borch, 'Crime Prevention as Totalitarian Biopolitics': 97

visible; it invents new mechanisms; it separates, it immobilizes, it partitions; it constructs for a time what is both a counter-city and the perfect society; it imposes an ideal functioning, but one that is reduced, in the final analysis, like the evil that it combats, to a simple dualism that of life and death: that which moves brings death, and one kills that which moves.[614]

A similar pattern is repeated in other situations of emergency or crisis. Through them, "the state of exception becomes the rule", becomes normalized, "and the hidden foundation of sovereignty is revealed, exposing the specificity of political modernity." Agamben explains that the crisis is made possible by means of a double process of the "politicization of life" which consists in the increasing inscription of life within the political order, "which in turn makes its exposure to power increasingly radical."[615]

The pattern may be extended to include not only danger but also risk, as a notion which does not imply a particular precise danger embodied in a concrete group of people, but as the effect of a combination of abstract factors which make more or less probable some sort of harm to order or society.[616] We have seen this extension in some instances in the war on terrorism as well when individual citizens have been targeted with little or no connection to terrorist activity. The logic of the war on terrorism easily extends its focus of attention from danger into risk. This movement

entails a potentially infinite multiplication of the possibilities for intervention. For what

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614   Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish: 205

615   Katia Genel, 'The Question of Biopower: Foucault and Agamben': 53

616   Castel R, 'From Dangerousness to Risk', in Burchell G, Gordon C, Miller P (eds)., *The Foucault Effect: studies in governmentality*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991): 287, quoted in Christian Borch, 'Crime Prevention as Totalitarian Biopolitics': 101

situation is there of which one can be certain that it harbours no risk, no uncontrollable or unpredictable chance feature? The modern ideologies of prevention are overarched by a grandiose technocratic rationalizing dream of absolute control of the accidental, understood as the irruption of the unpredictable.[617]

With a discourse of a constant state of emergency, it is no surprise that danger extends into risk, enabling intervention to respect no limits. Under such circumstances virtually every aspect of life may be regulated since nothing is too insignificant or marginal to evade intervention. Thus, Christian Borch argues of the idea of crime prevention that it has an expansive character that knows no natural limits, amounting to "a biopolitical power that contains totalitarian traits" in the sense of aiming at "controlling possible forms of behaviour and abolishing the uncontrollable before they have become a problem."[618]

The above elements found a concrete example in the case of Canadian Maher Arar, who was pulled aside and sent to be interrogated as a suspected terrorist while passing through JFK airport in 2002. Because of a tenuous link of passing acquaintance with someone suspected of a connection to al Qaeda, he was held for almost two weeks in the US, was then deported to Syria, where he was born, and held in a three feet wide prison for ten months, where he was tortured.[619] As with the case of Abu Ghraib, what I seek to determine is what this particular case adds to the discourse in its level of practices as part of a message. While the abuses of the jail of Abu Ghraib took place in a country which experiences war and violence on every day life, a state of affairs which is the opposite of normalcy, the case of Arar

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617   Castel R., 'From Dangerousness to Risk', quoted in Christian Borch, 'Crime Prevention as Totalitarian Biopolitics': 101, 102

618   Christian Borch, 'Crime Prevention as Totalitarian Biopolitics': 102, 103

619   David Mutimer, 'Sovereign Contradictions': 160, 161

brings such practices closer to the regular citizen of the US or any of its allies. It is thus a step in the direction of normalizing the exceptional. This is reinforced by the fact that the authorities *knew* of such a tenuous and circumstantial link to al Qaeda, for it establishes that the norm is that anyone should expect to have the details of their lives known as part of the ever more common practices of surveillance, discussed in further detail in the last section.

While it is indeed a step into normalization we must take notice that the authorities seek to retain a sense of these cases being exceptional, as if defending an image of normalcy which would be to some extent still in accordance to the language of values and rights. This may be the reason why torture has been put into practice outside US territory. Mutimer observes that the Canadian police felt it necessary to hand Maher Arar to the US for the probable reason that it enabled them to circumvent human rights guarantees for Canadian citizens. Similarly, the US felt it necessary to deport him to Syria, probably because "the U.S. officials knew that in Canada Maher Arar was unlikely to be tortured and by extension that they were fairly certain that in Syria he would be".[620] As shocking as it is to assume that the authorities of US and Canada calculated in terms of evading human rights guarantees and favouring torture, Mutimer's is a reasonable assumption as it appears to be a regular practice for the US government to perform "extraordinary renditions", which critics have correctly described as "outsourcing torture".[621] Bush himself has admitted that the CIA runs secret prisons overseas. "This program has been, and remains, one of the most vital tools in our war against the terrorists," he said. "Were it not for this program, our intelligence community believes that al-Qaida and its allies would have succeeded in launching another attack against the American homeland." Asked about the interrogation techniques, Bush said

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620   David Mutimer, 'Sovereign Contradictions':161
621   David Mutimer, 'Sovereign Contradictions':161

I cannot describe the specific methods used – I think you understand why. If I did, it would help the terrorists learn how to resist questioning and to keep information from us that we need to prevent new attacks on our country. But I can say the procedures were tough, and they were safe and lawful and necessary.

He denied, however, that he was talking about torture – a significant fact when considering the discourse of normalcy and values. He added that interrogation was not taking place at the moment because "CIA officials feel like the rules are so vague that they cannot interrogate without being tried as war criminals, and that's irresponsible".[622] According to ABC News, CIA sources revealed details about their "Enhanced Interrogation Techniques" in such prisons. They included grabbing, slapping, forcing to stand up for more than 40 hours, keeping prisoners and their cells cold, and waterboarding. The sources described the techniques in equal terms as Bush: "harsh", but not torture.[623] The fact that the authorities have brought 'closer to home' exceptional practices, yet they have attempted to partially conceal them by performing them abroad, having others perform them and describing them in more benign terms (harsh but not torture) is probably the reflection of the paradox of a discourse that functions on a spoken level as well as a level of practices that contradict but do not cancel each other.

Mutimer observes that one of the elements that stand out of Arar's case is "the arbitrary way that the

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622   'Bush admits the CIA runs secret prisons', *The Boston Globe*,
(http://www.boston.com/news/nation/washington/articles/2006/09/06/bush_to_unveil_plan_for_gitmo_trials/, September 6, 2006)

623   Brian Ross and Richard Esposito, 'CIA's Harsh Interrogation Techniques Described', *ABC News*,
http://abcnews.go.com/WNT/Investigation/story?id=1322866

rights we expect apply to us all were denied to him".[624] This way the sovereign power to do anything to anyone is confirmed by bringing it closer to 'us' (a Canadian citizen) while retaining the racist aspect of its application (born in Syria). A man was rendered bare life while his legal rights were the same as those of any other Canadian. Therefore, the act of making his an exceptional case is both a confirmation of the racist aspects of the war on terrorism and an expansion of the power of the sovereign which situates itself above every citizen's rights. As there was nothing special about this particular citizen, one must assume that the same can happen to anyone else, and as such it ceases to be an exception and becomes an example of a norm, albeit until now one rarely or not openly used. For Agamben, in fact, a generalization of the *homo sacer* may be expected in modernity as life is more clearly placed at the centre of State politics. Sovereignty places all of its subjects in risk of being rendered exceptional or bare life.[625] As such, these are no longer proper exceptions but a consequence of the essential structure of sovereign power. In terms of discourse, the sovereign speaks through these actions in an assertion of its power. There was no other point in torturing Arar, not even from the logic of emergency. Practices which started as a consequence of a discourse of emergency and danger are now moving to a point where the original emergency bears neither relevance nor direct connection with the original threat. The exception ceases to exist and slowly turns into a new normalcy which was in fact always essential: that of sovereign power as described by Agamben.

A further logical step in the process of normalization is be related to the legal sphere. A September 2006 document by Amnesty International illustrates how this has taken place in the war on terrorism:

The US administration's interpretation of the law has been driven by its policy choices rather

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624   David Mutimer, 'Sovereign Contradictions': 162, 163

625   Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer*: 111, quoted in David Mutimer, 'Sovereign Contradictions': 163

than a credible postulation of its legal obligations. One core policy choice was to frame its response to the 11 September attacks in terms of a global "war" rather than as a criminal law enforcement effort. The law would have to be made to fit this "new paradigm", as President Bush characterized the situation in a 7 February 2002 memorandum on detentions... The government's policy of indefinite detention without charge, as practiced in Guantánamo and elsewhere, is thus a direct consequence of the war paradigm. Instead of treating these detainees as criminal suspects, the US authorities have branded them as loosely-defined "enemy combatants" in a global conflict. That the USA sees the world as the "battlefield" is illustrated by the fact that those currently held in Guantánamo include individuals picked up in Gambia, Bosnia, Mauritania, Pakistan, Egypt, Indonesia, Thailand, and United Arab Emirates, as well as Afghanistan.[626]

According to an August 2002 Justice Department memo written for the CIA and addressed to Alberto Gonzales, torturing al Qaeda terrorists in captivity abroad "may be justified" and international laws against torture "may be unconstitutional if applied to interrogations" conducted in the war on terrorism.[627] Three weeks after Bush's admission about CIA prisons the Military Commissions Act was approved by Congress, conferring on the president the right to declare "alien unlawful enemy combatants" to be tried in Military Commissions, suspending the writ of habeas corpus and prohibiting a combatant under trial from invoking the Geneva Conventions as a source of rights. In January 2007 Alberto Gonzales claimed the authority to deny the right of habeas corpus to US citizens against a 2004

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626   'United States of America: Military Commissions Act of 2006 – Turning bad policy into bad law', *Amnesty International*, (http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAMR511542006, September 29, 2006)

627   Dana Priest and R. Jeffrey Smith, 'Memo Offered Justification for Use of Torture', *The Washington Post*, (http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A23373-2004Jun7.html, June 8, 2004)

Supreme Court's decision.[628]

These series of shifts in legal interpretations together represent a movement from the exceptional into normalcy. Naturally, if practices are to be read as discourse, so are changes in law. What is more clearly manifested in the definition and implications of an "enemy combatant", in the legal justification of torture or in the suspension of the right of habeas corpus is the paradox of the sovereign observed by Agamben, in which the sovereign, who is outside the law, declares that there is nothing outside the law.[629] By obtaining from the juridical order the power to proclaim a state of exception, the sovereign is in turn in a position to change the juridical order by making use of this very power.

The sovereign also turns into law – and thus discourse – its power to strip life of its political qualities and render it bare. The USA Patriot Act, the central piece of legislation enacted in the context of the war on terrorism, states that any US citizen can be stripped of their citizenship "if, with the intent to relinquish his nationality, he becomes a member of, or provides support to, a group that the United States has designated as a 'terrorist organization.'" Under the Domestic Security Enhancement Act, also known as "Patriot II", a citizen could be involuntarily expatriated if his intent is "inferred from conduct." This would conceivably allow the Department of Justice to summarily remove a citizenship without judicial review by alleging that the citizen engaged in activities which the government defines as "terrorist".[630] Since both the definition and the decision of removal come from the same source, this amounts to an explicit proclamation of the right to decide over life as political or bare.

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628   Adam Roberts, 'Review Essay: Torture and Incompetence in the 'War on Terror'': 210

629   Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, p. 15

630   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone: The Neo-Conservatives and the Global Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004): 286-290

3.2 The Camp: on the Outside, yet Within

In Agamben's work we read that the space that is opened when the state of exception begins to become the rule is the camp – a figure which he understands in a wide sense, including not only concentration, prisoner or refugee camps, but other less obvious spaces which could include borders or high security airports. All of these are spaces where the rule of law is temporary suspended and as such remain outside the normal order, yet they are permanent. In the Nazi regime the state of exception as a justification for the concentration camps ceased to be referred to as an external and provisional state of factual danger and came to be confused with juridical rule itself. Nazi jurists were aware of the particularity of the situation to the point that they defined it as a "state of willed exception". In that case the discourse implicit to practice became explicit in the juridical sphere. In the new paradigm of the camp the norm becomes indistinguishable from the exceptional. With the appearance of the camp the sovereign is no longer limiting himself to declaring the exception as a response to a danger to society, but "he now de facto produces the situation as a consequence of his decision on the exception." In this sense the juridical and the factual get confused to the point that the camp becomes "*a hybrid of law and fact in which the two terms have become indistinguishable.*"[631]

Furthermore, to the extent that the inmates of the camp are stripped of political status, reduced to bare life and managed as such, the camp is the extreme of a biopolitical space, since power and bare life are confronted without any mediation. As such it is a paradigm of political space.[632] If we add the discursive dimension, then the establishment of a camp could be interpreted as a declaration of regression into a primal political state without political rights where the sovereign is defined as such

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631   Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer*: 168-170. Italics in the original.

632   Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer*: 171

because of its monopoly of violence. Agamben, however, would not see it as a regression but rather as a feature of modern states under crisis. He writes:

> In this light, the birth of the camp in our time appears as an event that decisively signals the political space of modernity itself. It is produced at the point at which the political system of the modern nation-state… enters into a lasting crisis, and the State decides to assume directly the care of the nation's biological life as one of its proper tasks... The growing dissociation of birth (bare life) and the nation-state is the new fact of politics in our day, and what we call *camp* is this disjunction.[633]

In terms of the war on terrorism it is easy to recognize in Agamben's analysis the latest and most clear manifestation of the camp in Guantanamo Bay. The US government claims that those held are beyond US law and the constitutional rights they would be afforded as prisoners on US soil. Guantanamo currently holds some 650 men (as well as some children) without charge or trial. They are denied the right to legal counsel and subject to degrading and cruel conditions such as solitary confinement and intensive interrogation without the presence of a lawyer. Most have not been charged and the US considers them "enemy combatants", which allows for them to be held indefinitely without recourse to the courts, as mentioned above. The US will not declare them prisoners of war nor clarify their legal status in front of a tribune as required under the Third Geneva Convention; but rather it plans to try them by military tribunals.[634] Under the light of Agamben's work these anomalies should be no surprise; the very nature of Guantanamo Bay as a camp would determine and require the existence of

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633   Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer*: 174, 175

634   Engin F. Isin and Kim Rygiel, 'Abject Spaces: Frontiers, Zones, Camps', in Elizabeth Dauphinee and Cristina Masters (eds.) *The Logics of Biopower and the War on Terror; Living, Dying, Surviving* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007): 197

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undefined legal figures such as the "enemy combatant" and exceptional tribunals. As a paradoxical space where the exception has been granted a permanent space and political life has been rendered bare, it would be impossible for regular legal conditions to prevail.

The fact that the tribunals which will be taking care of the procedure are military is also significant in terms of discourse. Since they are widely perceived as administering a rougher version of justice than civil courts[635] and form part of the branch of government which can legitimately make use of violence, the sword prevails over citizenship and therefore nothing mediates between power and bare life.

An interesting feature of the camps of the war on terrorism is that those which are more openly violent remain further away from US territory. Agamben recognized rather benign spaces such as airports and cities as camps[636] and he argued that in every modern state the line determining the point in which biopolitics turned into "thanatopolitics", or the politics of death, was gradually moving into areas other than the political.[637] We could certainly find examples of these specifically linked to the discourse of the war on terrorism. However, borders tend to be more violent[638] and Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo and secret detention sites where forms of torture are practiced remain outside US territory. This is significant for more than one reason. As noted above, the US government argues against granting legal rights to inmates of Guantanamo on the basis that it is not US territory. But in fact, this is not Cuban territory proper either, just as Abu Ghraib and the secret detention centres do not quite correspond to the political borders within which they are found. They are what Engin F. Isin and Kim Rygiel call abject spaces, defined as

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635 Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 290

636 Engin F. Isin and Kim Rygiel, 'Abject Spaces': 182

637 Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer*: 122, 123

638 For an analysis of the US-Mexico border as a camp see Roxanne Lynn Doty, 'Crossroads of Death'

extraterritorial spaces where international and national laws are suspended… spaces for holding refugees, asylum seekers, deportees, combatants, insurgents, and others caught in the new global policing and policies net. These spaces include various frontiers controlled by state authorities, zones where special rules and laws apply, and camps where laws are suspended.[639]

Isin and Rygiel indicate that those who are constituted through these abject spaces "are rendered as neither subjects nor objects but inexistent insofar as they become inaudible and invisible."[640] This is correct in the sense that most of these people are not granted any right to speak and remain anonymous. But they are not entirely invisible as, intended or not, the world has already been shocked by the cases mentioned in this chapter. However, Isin and Rygiel reveal with their observation a possible reason for the US government to create the most extreme camps away from its territory: while the true nature of the power of the sovereign gets exposed through such practices, the aspiration to keep a certain sense of rights and values remains. Abject spaces reflect the paradox that while the sovereign's right to render bare life is immanent to the modern state, it needs to be affirmed in spaces in the 'outside', so that the explicit language of citizenship with rights can exist 'within'. Guantanamo Bay and the most extreme camps reveal the duplicity of the discourse. The two levels are equally relevant for the production of the discourse: the explicit language speaks of these spaces as exceptional because of an emergency or state of exception; the unspoken one which is presented on the level of facts affirms the brutality of the power of the sovereign.

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639   Engin F. Isin and Kim Rygiel, 'Abject Spaces': 181

640   Engin F. Isin and Kim Rygiel, 'Abject Spaces': 181, 182

3.3 *The Panopticon*

Camps and torture are some of the most violent examples of the application of power. However, biopolitics or disciplinary techniques and control in society are not just as apparent, but also ubiquitous, a fact of which Foucault and others were quite aware and made central to their research.[641] When examining the techniques of management of population we find different forms of micropower. Modern day examples of these, associated with immigration[642] and travel but also with the war on terrorism, are the use of high-tech surveillance mechanisms such as biometric fingerprinting, identification cards, and other policing practices.

This section deals with the practice of surveillance as a technique of enforcing discipline in the context of the war on terrorism and examined through a discursive perspective, with the goal of identifying the message implied. The disciplinary principle of surveillance was exposed by Foucault through his analysis of Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon, the nineteenth century thinker that Marx and Engels considered the theoretician of the bourgeoisie.[643] Bentham's Panopticon is an architectural figure designed to enforce discipline where needed: prisons, hospitals, schools, factories, and so on. It is described by Foucault[644] this way: At the periphery of the structure an annular building is built with a tower at the centre. The tower displays wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring. The peripheric building is divided into cells or rooms, each of which extends the whole width of the building. The rooms have two windows, one on the inside, facing the windows of the tower, and the

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641   David Campbell, 'The Biopolitics of Security': 134

642   Roxanne Lynn Doty, 'Crossroads of Death': 15

643   Stephen Gill, 'The Global Panopticon? The Neoliberal State, Economic Life, and Democratic Surveillance', *Alternatives*, 2 (1995): 8

644   Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London: Penguin Books, 1977): 200-202

other on the outside, allowing the light to cross the cell from one end to the other. All that would be needed to watch the cells would be a supervisor or guard in the central tower to observe all the prisoners, workers or students on the cells around him. This mechanism allows to see constantly and to have immediate recognition.

Those confined to the cells are always seen from the front by the supervisor, but they are unable to communicate with each other because the side walls prevent them from contact. The consequence of this lateral invisibility is a guarantee of order, since it prevents the organisation of collective actions. Besides – and this is the major effect of the Panopticon – it induces in the inmate "a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power". [645] In view of this, Bentham laid down the principle that power should be both visible and unverifiable. "Visible: the inmate will constantly have before his eyes the tall outline of the central tower from which he is spied upon. Unverifiable: the inmate must never know whether he is being looked at any moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so". [646]

In the Panopticon, Foucault explains, "one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen". [647] It "automatizes and disindividualizes power". [648] Power has its principle not so much in a person or authority, but

> in a certain concerted distribution of bodies, surfaces, lights, gazes; in an arrangement whose
> internal mechanisms produce the relation in which individuals are caught up… There is a

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645   Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*: 201
646   Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*: 201
647   Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*: 202
648   Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*: 202

machinery that assures dissymmetry, disequilibrium, difference. Consequently, it does not matter who exercises power. [649]

It is not necessary to use force, since the inmates have an "anxious awareness of being observed".[650] The Panopticon works not so much because someone is observing but because of the awareness of the inmates of the possibility of being observed at any given moment. As such, its power is derived not from a physically constraining force, but rather from a discursive practice, an exchange of information between those behind the mechanism and those subjected to it, a message that may be formulated as 'power is watching you'. The inmates feel anxious not because the power over them has actually become stronger, but because now they have been forced to know this more acutely.

As Foucault argues, the Panopticon "must be understood as a generalizable model of functioning; a way of defining power relations in terms of the everyday life of men".[651] It is to be expected, then, that some of the everyday mechanisms we take for granted in our society are in fact panoptical schemes. For an example of a variant of the principle within a Western European society, one of the key ideas of the Danish Crime Prevention Council has been "to observe crime in terms of its spatial anchoring... techniques that aim to prevent interactions from occurring in public space" while seeking ways to make people the object of observation. The Council suggests a number of "material technologies which are assumed to enable this mutual observation of each other's lives and activities: the use of glass facades, good lighting, low plantings, visible paths, etc., which all are believed to make it difficult for potential offenders to hide, and which increase the resident's abilities to monitor what goes on in the

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649   Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*: 202
650   Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*: 202
651   Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*: 205

community."[652] As in Bentham's Panopticon, visibility is crucial, though this scheme has the distinguishing particularity that instead of the observation of the many by the few, the arrangement allows for the observation of the few by the many.[653]

Many other new techniques and technologies still favour the observation of the many by the few. Mark Poster points out that in the late twentieth century technical conditions of surveillance have considerably advanced, though Foucault neglected to take notice of them.[654] Writing half a decade before the current war on terrorism Stephen Gill already saw a growing tendency in the use of surveillance and techniques for maximizing knowledge about and influence over workers, savers and consumers, in discourses and practices of world order that he called "disciplinary neoliberalism".[655] He notes that much of the contemporary innovation in surveillance practice and technology has been driven by the bureaucratic state gathering information about populations and by capitalist enterprises seeking to maximize profit and to eliminate risk. The capacity of telecommunications to centralize data that was previously stored separately, either geographically or functionally also lies at the heart of these developments.[656] Gill examines panoptical tendencies in working places, market forces, global finance and intelligence agencies, such as the NSA or the CIA. Poster calls the result of the development of new technologies a "Superpanopticon" constituted by the "circuits of communication" and the databases they generate. It is composed by

a system of surveillance without walls, towers or guards… The populace has been disciplined to

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652   Christian Borch, 'Crime Prevention as Totalitarian Biopolitics': 97
653   Christian Borch, 'Crime Prevention as Totalitarian Biopolitics': 97
654   Mark Poster, *The Mode of information, Poststructuralism and Social Context* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990): 91
655   Stephen Gill, 'The Global Panopticon?': 1, 2
656   Stephen Gill, 'The Global Panopticon?': 16-17

surveillance and to participating in the process. Social security cards, drivers' licences, credit cards, library cards and the like – the individuals must apply for them, have them ready at all times, use them continuously… Unlike the panopticon, the Superpanopticon effects its workings almost without effort… The phone cables and electronic circuitry that envelop our world are the extremities of the super-panopticon, transferring our acts into an extensive discourse of surveillance, our private behaviours into public announcements, our individual deeds into collective language.[657]

Technology has made it impossible for a person to walk around Manhattan without being recorded at almost every instant. It is calculated that a shopper on London's Oxford Street is photographed some seventeen times, with the number increasing substantially if the person enters a store. On average, someone living in London may be photographed some 300 times in one single day.[658] Furthermore, traceable RFID and GPS microchips are implanted in a wide range of everyday devices, such as mobile phones, PDAs, and car navigation and highway toll-payment systems, allowing for the movements of their carriers to be tracked. Biometric devices can identify a person from their fingerprints, iris pattern or facial structure.[659] Through technology, the disciplinary effect is extended from specific places into society at large. It is now the masses who feel the anxiety of the message of being watched by power, regardless of anyone actually watching at any given moment or taking any action about it.

Surveillance practices and techniques based on the panoptical principle have swelled with the war on terrorism, and as such, they constitute an important aspect of the discourse in its practical form. In its

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657   Mark Poster, *The Mode of information*: 93, 87

658   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 292, 293

659   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 292

key provisions the Patriot Act updates the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) by removing or loosening constraints on government capabilities to collect intelligence. Among others, John Podesta, Bill Clinton's Chief of Staff from 1998 through 2001, has manifested his concern about the bill increasing the opportunity "for law enforcement and the intelligence community to return to an era where they monitored and sometimes harassed individuals who were merely exercising their First Amendment rights. Nothing that occurred on September 11 mandates that we return to such an era." [660]

Section 216 expands to the Internet the allowable use of devices which record outgoing and incoming telephone numbers. While the surveillance of the actual content of web transmissions is prohibited, exactly what constitutes transactional information as opposed to content is not very clear. Web sites and other electronic transactional information may provide a great deal of information about an individual's actions and personal life. A web search may reveal private details.[661] By covering aspects of life such as the Internet or telephone calls, the expansion of surveillance has surpassed its alleged reason for being, as it is increasingly difficult to understand how a generalized surveillance of such activities may help to prevent terrorism. Even if it does, we may wonder if a slight increase in security is worth the sacrifice of privacy of the population in general. Since the measures are not focused on clearly justifiably suspected terrorists, another message is suggested: that the sovereign has the power to watch anyone, that its discretion counts more than political rights to privacy, that anyone is suspected of being an enemy of sovereignty and as such a possible candidate to become bare life.

This is reinforced in different ways, of which the following are only examples. The Patriot Act does not require intelligence agencies to demonstrate before a court of law that there is a probable offence in

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660   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 287

661   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 286, 287

order to obtain a judge's approval for surveillance. It simply requires agents to state that the tap would be of some use, "however general or ambiguous, in a criminal investigation, rendering judicial oversight of such activities negligible." Under the Patriot Act the FBI can use its "Carnivore" system, which allows it to monitor all subscribers of an Internet service provider if one user is a target, with few barriers of privacy protections. Section 206 amends the 1978 Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, which required intelligence agents to obtain separate court orders to monitor each telephone, computer, or communication facility. Section 206 permits "roving wiretaps", which would tap the person rather than the phone. Consider an example of how such extension may affect society: since targets use public communications facilities, it is conceivable that all the pay phones in an entire neighbourhood could be tapped, allowing the government to intercept communications of ordinary citizens without a search warrant. Section 215 allows business records and computer hard drives of anyone to be searched in the name of a terrorism investigation and, like the new wiretap law, restrains people from informing anyone of such monitoring. This includes records held by public libraries. Government officials have much easier access to monitoring the activities of citizens, since "to obtain such records, the government need only certify that the target is part of a foreign intelligence investigation and does not have to submit any sort of proof that the target is in any way a foreign agent." Section 213 also amends the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure to allow authorities to search and seize the property of a target without notifying the owner. These types of searches are barred from traditional warrants. But they can now be conducted if the government argues that notification would engender an "adverse result". Among the draft provisions of Patriot Act II are powers that would allow federal authorities to wiretap any individual for fifteen days without a court warrant. The act also creates a "Terrorist Identification Database" that would include the DNA of citizens and noncitizens. People would be forced, on penalty

of $200,000 and a year in jail, to submit DNA samples to authorities on mere suspicion of an association with some sort of terrorist group.[662]

Shortly after September 11, 2001, the Pentagon announced an initiative originally called "Total Information Awareness", later renamed as "Terrorist Information Awareness" because of public concerns. It is noteworthy that the very name of the programme was sending a message which made the public anxious enough to be noticed by authorities in order for an adjustment to be made. TIA is under the auspices of the Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA, dedicated to formulating high technology and innovative approaches to security issues). The initiative was announced as a prototype program that would combine several databases, both commercial and governmental, from across the world in order to allow the government to detect "patterns" of possible terrorist activity involving details routine aspects of daily life, such as monetary transactions or travel. According to DARPA, the object is to allow "identification of connected items of information from multiple sources and databases whose significance is not known until the connections are made." Similarly, the Transportation Security Agency would administer the Computer Assisted Passenger Pre-Screening II (CAPPS II) programme. Travellers would be screened through databases on personal details to determine whether they would constitute terrorist threats. Although these two programmes found opposition from the Senate[663] and thus they may never come into practice exactly as originally planned, their effect as discourse has already taken place.

To stress the point once more, the principle of the Panopticon at work in the practices of surveillance that have increasingly appeared in the context of the war on terrorism carries a message that stresses

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662   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 288, 289
663   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 293, 294

again the power of the sovereign and its capability to administer life and death. The recurrence of such practices incorporates the message as a subtext of the discourse.

4. Conclusions

The discourse of the war on terrorism cannot be fully understood without an analysis of the level of practice, considered as part of the discourse itself. Language and practice together confer an additional meaning that neither do separately. In the respect that both are elements of the discourse, we find a departure from Foucault, who would see a clear division between the discursive and the extra-discursive, even if a relationship existed.

While Foucault's concept of biopolitics is a useful platform to understand certain practices of the war on terrorism, the work of Giorgio Agamben on bare life and the camp are more to the point. Through these concepts we see that the main message appearing at the level of practice – whether intentional or not – is an affirmation of the power of the sovereign to strip life of its political qualities and to turn it into bare life; that is, to turn a citizen into a human being without rights to protect them from the sovereign, the holder of the monopoly of violence. This message often contradicts the message at the level of the spoken word, yet it is not cancelled by it. The message as a whole then becomes paradoxical and the paradoxes and contradictions manifest in different ways: exceptional circumstances yet normal; outside society yet within; the threat from small groups yet measures for everyone.

Through his observations in regards to the Panopticon, Foucault becomes again relevant in order to identify the content of the discourse in modern practices of surveillance. The message is again the affirmation of the power of the sovereign, but this time in the sense of the capability of observing

members of society and stripping them of their sense of privacy – a final reminder of its ability to remove political rights and render bare life.

Chapter 5

Social Antagonism: The Responses of the Hegemonic Discourse to Challenges from the Constitutive Outside

In a critical account of Foucauldian power, Steven Lukes points out that in its radical interpretation there is no possibility of escaping domination, "for power is everywhere, precluding liberation and imposing regimes of truth."[664] Particularly in Foucault's earlier writings the 'subject' was fully constituted by power relations since identity itself would be their product. Eventually, Foucault came to disown this radical view, which would make resistance impossible and undermine Foucault's own critical standpoint and political positions.[665] He identified the critical function of philosophy with the challenging of all phenomena of domination and proposed an ethos which would allow the inevitable games of power to be played with a minimum of domination.[666] It is the possibility of resistance in discursive domains that opens the door to the subject of the present chapter: the confrontation of opposing discourses regarding the war on terrorism in order to learn what it reveals about the dominant discourse. As such, the argument presented here is only consistent with the later Foucault.

Foucault thought that there is no essential principle of coherence in a discourse, and that it should be conceived only as a more or less regulated system of dispersion. It is true that discourses are never well defined monolithic units; they are flexible, change with circumstances and are marked by contradictions; they resonate with previous and contemporary discourses and reinvent themselves to the point of being unrecognizable, only to reappear again in other historical contexts. This raises the

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664   Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View* (UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005): 123

665   Steven Lukes, *Power*: 123

666   Barry Hindess, *Discourses of Power: from Hobbes to Foucault* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996): 153

problem of the determination of a discourse. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe provide an answer by arguing that "the ordering effects of the relations of difference and equivalence, the workings of different kinds of overdetermination, and the nodal points are factors that give rise to a certain regularity which can be signified as a 'totality'." [667]

But how are the limits of a discursive formation established? While Laclau and Mouffe accounted for the construction of the regularity in dispersion of discourses with a theory of hegemony, they have attempted to answer the question of the limits with a related theory, that of social antagonism.[668] This chapter finds the conceptual framework of hegemony and social antagonism useful as departure points, as it aims to explore the friction between the current dominant discourse of the United States war on terrorism and challenging narratives as expressed through concrete criticisms and indictments: about the results of the campaign, the way it has been conducted, overall US current and historical imperialist tendencies, and allegations of deception about the facts sustaining such actions. The notions of 'truth' (in a Foucauldian sense), reason, madness and morality are revealed as playing a fundamental part in the strategy of the discourse as it is recreated as a response to challenges through a process of selectivity: a choice of reported facts on which to sustain the production of chosen themes and discursive objects.

One of the central departing points from Foucault of this thesis has been to highlight the importance of the validity of basic verifiable facts as useful points of reference for the purpose of discourse analysis, mainly in order to identify disproportionality and the Straussian use of 'noble lies' and the creation of myths. While this chapter retains the sense that there are valid facts that can be potentially verified and

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667   Jacob Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe and Zizek* (UK: Blackwell, 1999): 99, 100

668   Jacob Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse*: 99, 100

which place different discourses under different categories, the objective is not to reach a forensic proof of any factual truths, but rather to assess the responses of the hegemonic discourse towards challenging narratives.

This is a necessary clarification because not all of the alleged facts on which the confronting narratives base their attacks can be verified straightforwardly. While at this point in time it is reasonable to assume, for example, that the regime of Saddam Hussein had no weapons of mass destruction nor working links with Al Qaeda; or that the 'terrorist cell' captured in Miami posed little to no real threat to society; it is a different story to determine the number of civilian casualties in Iraq as a result of the war, and there are, indeed, quite diverging versions of this figure depending on the source. While George W. Bush admitted 30,000 civilian deaths in Iraq in the first two years of the war[669], an earlier scientific study had estimated the total toll at around 100,000[670], a 2006 UN Report described about a 100 deaths a day,[671] and a 2006 study raised the estimate to 655,000 deaths.[672] Critical postures use the latter figures as basis while the US administration tends to ignore them.

The reports of political events that reach us do so only through a series of filters in the media, different branches of government, institutions in the field of social sciences and occasionally hard sciences.

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669   Derrick Z. Jackson, 'Iraqi civilian deaths mount – and count', *The Boston Globe*, (http://www.boston.com/news/globe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2005/12/17/iraqi_civilian_deaths_mount____and_count /, December 17, 2005)

670   Shaoni Bhattacharya, 'Civilian death toll in Iraq exceeds 100,000', *NewScientist*, (http://www.newscientist.com/news/print.jsp?id=ns99996596, October 29, 2004)

671   Patrick Cockburn, '100 Iraqis being killed each day, says UN', *The Independent*, (http://news.independent.co.uk/world/middle_east/article1187007.ece, July 20, 2006)

672   Sarah Boseley, '655,000 Iraqis killed since invasion', *The Guardian*, (http://www.guardian.co.uk/Iraq/Story/0,,1892888,00.html?gusrc=rss&feed=1, October 11, 2006)

When we find that there is often friction between different narratives in relation to allegations of the empirical validity of reported facts and events, it is easy to fall into the temptation of immediately preferring one source or version over another. However, precisely because so much is at stake depending on where these basic truths lie, we should leave their forensic verification to in-depth investigations of a different nature, more suitable for the disciplines of journalism, history and hard sciences than to discourse analysis. This is why in this chapter I prefer to refer to *reported* facts when dealing with different versions, except for those that we can safely assume to be true without further need of verification.

1. Hegemonic Discourse, Social Antagonism and the Constitutive Outside

Laclau and Mouffe believe that the political and moral-intellectual leadership of a hegemonic force finds its expression in the construction of a discursive formation that allows demands, views and attitudes. Hegemony is the expansion of a discourse into a dominant position in a context of antagonistic forces. However, this is not a Marxist hegemony, as it is no longer conceived as a strictly class practice but, rather, as the principle of discursive articulation in general. The construction of a hegemonic discourse is the result of *articulation*, defined as a "practice establishing relations among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice".[673] The articulation of discursive elements takes place in a conflictual terrain of power and resistance and always includes an element of force and repression.[674] In this, the authors move away from Foucault, who gave priority

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[673]   Jacob Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse*: 101.

[674]   Jacob Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse*: 101. The notion of social antagonism is developed in Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and socialist strategy: towards a radical democratic politics* (London: Verso, 1985). For a commentary on the implications of this text see Slavoj Zizek, 'Beyond Discourse-Analysis', in Ernesto Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*, (London-New York: Verso, 1990)

to the production of discourse rather than to its repressive aspects. However, it should also be noted that, although Laclau and Mouffe were much more explicit about social antagonism as an analytical concept, the idea was not entirely alien to Foucault, who proposed at one point "taking the forms of resistance against different forms of power as a starting point... analyzing power relations through the antagonism of strategies".[675]

By constructing and constraining common meanings, power and exclusion are essential features of hegemony. James Martin explains the significance of antagonism in hegemony, as proposed by Laclau and Mouffe:

> Dominant discourses succeed by displacing alternative modes of argument and forms of activity; by marginalising radically different discourses; by naturalising their hierarchies and exclusions presenting them in the form of 'common sense'; and by effacing the traces of their own contingency.

> A successful hegemony will seek to render itself incontestable. Yet, despite this, no hegemony can ever be completely successful. For the political logic of discourse ensures that the condition of its possibility is simultaneously the condition of its impossibility. A hegemonic discourse cannot fix meaning totally and finally because exclusion and difference are intrinsic to it. There is always an 'outside' that threatens the stability of the 'inside' and reveals the traces of its contingency, that is, its hegemonic stabilisation through power and exclusion.[676]

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675   Michel Foucault, 'The Subject and Power', in Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose, (eds.), The Essential Foucault, Selections from The Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984, (New York, London: The New Press, 1994): 128, 129
676   James Martin, 'The political logic of discourse: a neo-Gramscian view', History of European Ideas 28 (2002): 24,

Thus, an hegemonic discourse implies antagonism as it is the contrast with alternatives and challenges that sustains and reinforces hegemony, provides some of its essential elements and allows it to reinvent itself as a dynamic force.

Not all articulations are hegemonic. What distinguishes an hegemonic articulation is that it involves some element of force and repression, and the negation of identity: both in the sense of the negation of alternative meanings and options, and the negation of the people who identify themselves with the alternatives. Social antagonism emerges as the result of the negation of identity. The hegemonic force "will tend to construct the excluded identity as one of a series of threatening obstacles to the full realization of chosen meanings and options."[677]

In order to establish the limits of a discourse or discursive formation we need to do so in terms of what is beyond those limits. We should not be looking merely for new differences, but rather for "a beyond that is not simply one more difference, but something that poses a threat to all the differences within the discursive formation."[678] A discourse establishes its limits by excluding a "radical otherness that has no common measure with the differential system from which it is excluded, and that therefore poses a constant threat to that very system."[679] This radical otherness is what Laclau, inspired by Staten, calls a *constitutive outside*, which "introduces a radical negativity that cannot be absorbed by Hegelian dialectics, as it is the conceptual system as such that is negated."[680] The question for Laclau, and for the

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677   Jacob Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse*: 120

678   Jacob Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse*: 124

679   Jacob Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse*: 124

680   Jacob Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse*: 124

objective of this chapter, is how this constitutive outside is discursively constructed.

2. Challenges to the discourse and strategies of response

Considering that it is not possible to speak of the world without a discursive standpoint, it is safe to assume that each of the criticisms articulated against the war on terrorism come from specific general narratives, even if only vaguely defined in the mind of the speakers. Traces of diverse philosophical, scientific, political or religious ideals – such as socialism, anti-imperialism, international justice and equality, liberalism, an advocacy of human rights, the search for truth or Christian morality – may be found in the common indictments against the US government and its supporters. However, it is not central to the act of challenging to explicitly insert the charges in the grand narrative or narratives that sustain them. Most commonly the challengers find that it is sufficient to expose the contradictions of the discourse of the war on terrorism or to reveal reported facts that it has selectively ignored, while not necessarily making open reference to their sustaining narrative. As the main task in this chapter is to analyse the point of friction between opposing discourses in order to examine the strategies of response of the discourse of the war on terrorism, I will not describe the narratives that sustain the challenges, but the specific reported facts from which the charges spring and which most often sustain the indictments. The latter is necessary to show that there exist multiple reported historical and current events that are selectively ignored by the discourse of the war on terrorism, thus a great variety of alternative discourses may be produced. Therefore, the discourse must somehow deal with these in order to maintain its stability and validity and retain its hegemonic character.

Certain types of reported historical episodes are sometimes mentioned as background or context on which to refer to current events; the ones that are useful to suggest that it is the US the one engaged in

terrorism and not the 'other': the enemy in turn. This is the case of CIA interventions in Latin America, Asia and elsewhere that helped organisations in the application of repressive techniques, such as torture and murder.[681] The International Court of Justice condemned the US in June 1986 for the "unlawful use of force" of the CIA and the Contras in Nicaragua,[682] an accusation that has been used to characterize these actions as 'terrorism' by critics. Since 'terrorism' is a discursive object already defined by the dominant discourse, a problematization or relativization of what it is cannot be allowed to take place. Indeed, the strategy of some of the critics is to use the discursive object 'terrorism' in its opposite direction, accusing powerful states, first of all the US, as historical terrorists.[683]

Just as the concept 'terrorism' has been used in an opposite direction, the ideal of 'democracy' has been invoked against US intervention. The CIA has been reported to intervene in political and electoral processes that could arguably be objectified as 'democratic' (even if as 'democratic' processes they are largely imperfect or nascent) in at least Iran (1953), Guatemala (1954), Vietnam (1954), Lebanon (1957), Laos (1960-62), British Guiana (1961), Zaire (1962), Brazil (1964), Indonesia (1965), Ecuador (1963), Chile (1973) and Nicaragua (1981).[684] Since the discourse produces the 'truth' that the US stands for democracy as a moral foundation, questions about the reasons for the interventions must also be denied.

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681   Michael McClintock, 'American Doctrine and State Terror', in Alexander George (ed.), *Western State Terrorism*, (UK: Polity Press, 1991): 142

682   Noam Chomsky, 'International Terrorism: Image and Reality', in Alexander George (ed.), *Western State Terrorism*, (UK: Polity Press, 1991): 16, 20

683   This is a common theme in Chomsky's work (and others). It is clear that his is a deliberate destabilizing strategy, since he has recognized that 'terrorism' is in a general sense a concept of propaganda.

684   Ted C. Lewellen, 'The US and State Terrorism in the Third World', in Michael Stohl and George A. Lopez (eds.), *Terrible Beyond Endurance?: The Foreign Policy of State Terrorism*: 88-96

Historical events have also been used to support the allegation that the allies of the US may have also practised 'terrorism'. Ariel Sharon, who was until January of 2006 the Prime Minister of Israel, and whose objectives were condoned or supported by the neoconservative and Israel lobby groups in the US, commanded Israeli forces in 1953 that murdered 69 Palestinian civilians in the West Bank village of Qibya.[685] Years later he became Defence Minister, and in 1983, a Commission set up by the Israeli government determined that he and other Israeli authorities bore indirect "personal responsibility" for the massacre in Lebanon of between 700 and 3,500 unarmed Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps.[686] Reported events such as these may lead to accusations of double standards in US classifications of who are to be considered 'terrorists' and who are not.

By making use of similar templates for criticism, current indictments usually refer to the material consequences of the war on Afghanistan and Iraq, the most obvious grand scale actions having taken place within the context of the war on terrorism, which were partially sold to the public as acts of delivering democracy to these countries and a fight against tyrannies that were aiding or harboring terrorists, but which have also had the price of a number of civilian deaths.[687] Once again, civilian deaths are a natural ground on which to accuse the perpetrators of 'terrorism'.

Also to be considered is the discussion about the real reasons for war on Iraq. As has been mentioned

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685   Noam Chomsky, *Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel, and the Palestinians*, (London: Pluto Press, 1999): 97, 383; Joel Beinin, 'The Israelization of American Middle East Policy Discourse', *Social Text*, 21-2 (2003): 128

686   Joel Beinin, 'Is Terrorism a Useful Term in Understanding the Middle East and the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict', *Radical History Review*, 85 (Winter 2003): 20, 21; Ilan Peleg, 'A Different Type of War: Begin and Sharon's Invasion of Lebanon', in Michael Stohl and George A. Lopez (eds.), *Terrible Beyond Endurance?: The Foreign Policy of State Terrorism*: 220, 221

687   Shaoni Bhattacharya, 'Civilian death toll in Iraq exceeds 100,000'; Patrick Cockburn, '100 Iraqis being killed each day, says UN'; Sarah Boseley, '655,000 Iraqis killed since invasion'

above and in previous chapters, it is now common knowledge that the contention that Hussein held weapons of mass destruction and ties to Al-Qaeda was incorrect.[688] Thus, from accusations of carelessness and irresponsibility for the 'failure of intelligence' to charges of deliberate lies, holders of critical stances have had a platform from which to attack the discourse of the war on terrorism, with implications for the validity of the practical application of Western 'democratic values'. Similarly, the numerous damning reports about the practices of US authorities towards its war prisoners or 'enemy combatants' in places such as Abu Ghraib[689] or Guantanamo Bay[690] have had a negative effect on the perception of the fairness of the war on terrorism. The effect has been increased by the perception of changes in laws and an increase in surveillance techniques within the US legislation such as the USA Patriot Act and the Domestic Security Enhancement Act, which have been resented as erosions of civil rights.[691]

All of the above reported facts are not necessarily used to question the basic assumptions of the discourse of the war on terrorism; they may limit their attacks to the manner of carrying out counter-terrorism, while still accepting that some kind of counter-terrorist strategy is justified and needed for a real threat. While they still represent a challenge, by sharing the most basic assumptions they overlap to a great extent with the hegemonic discourse. The question here is how the dominant discourse reacts when confronted with these issues. Further below we will see examples of criticisms that represent a

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688   See for example: Craig Unger, 'The War They Wanted, The Lies They Needed', *Vanity Fair*, (http://www.vanityfair.com/features/general/articles/060606fege02, December 2005)

689   'Iraq: One year on the human rights situation remains dire', *Amnesty International*, (http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGMDE140062004, March 18, 2004)

690   'Guantánamo: Lives torn apart – The impact of indefinite detention on detainees and their families', *Amnesty International*, (http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAMR510072006, February 6, 2006); 'Guantanamo Bay inmates 'tortured'', *BBC News* (http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/americas/4710966.stm, February 13, 2006)

691   Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*: 286-294

radical opposition even to the commonly accepted reported factual foundations of the discourse.

Discussion of the above reported facts is not openly prohibited by the discourse. There is no explicit punishment for writing, speaking or demonstrating about civilian deaths in Iraq, Afghanistan or Palestine. There could not be any without a further price towards the hegemonic discourse itself, which is purported to defend democratic principles, which include the right to freedom of speech. An open prohibition would probably increase the volume of the challenging voices. If there is any prohibition as such, at this moment it is more the product of the unspoken threat of consequences of dissension, however mild or severe, than any actual censorship as commonly understood. There may actually be no need for any explicit prohibition. According to a study by FAIR, a US media watch group, out of 319 on-camera sources appearing in stories about the war on Iraq on the nightly network newscasts during October 2003, 244 (76 %) were current or former government or military officials.[692] While this is no proof, it does suggest that the sort of 'prohibition' taking place is mostly in the form of self-censorship consisting of the broadcaster's choice of official sources over dissenting voices, a selectivity which will help determine what is to be 'true'.[693]

However, other strategies of response different from open prohibition do take place and reveal the negation of identity characteristic of social antagonism. It is possible to identify at least five strategies that work in a sort of progression depending on the necessity of control over the discourse, though there is no reason why these strategies or steps could not take place all simultaneously or in a different sequence, as often happens. What I have called a progression is an abstraction based on the degree of

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692   Jon Whiten, 'If News From Iraq is Bad, It's Coming From US Officials', *FAIR*,
(http://www.fair.org/index.php?page=1167, February 2004)

693   For examples of self-censorship in US media see Richard Jackson, *Writing the war on terrorism: Language, Politics and Counter-Terrorism*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005): 166-171

intervention of the representatives of the network of power producing the hegemonic discourse. The steps do not occur in a predetermined order.

The first step takes place even before the discourse is challenged and as it is being produced – we could call it a preemptive strategy. Discursive objects are produced that appear to perform the task of preventing certain issues from arising. For example, a discussion about historical context and its implications for the war on terrorism is suggested to be irrelevant, because the attacks of September 11, 2001 marked a "new era"[694] and a "new kind of war".[695] Not only do any questions about the past become useless, but without the constraint of history or context the network which produces the discourse has virtually unlimited possibilities to reinvent it.

Some prison abuse scandals were also preemptively engaged even before their emergence by a legal concept and discursive object: that of the 'enemy combatant', a versatile category since it is not properly defined. As noted in a previous chapter, the Justice Department argues that any US citizen may be detained indefinitely without charges or access to counsel if the executive branch presents "some evidence" that he is an enemy combatant. This was the case of Jose Padilla. That such a discursive object is a tool for the *will to power* and not the *will to truth* is supported by the fact that some terrorist suspects are presented as 'enemy combatants' while others are subjected to criminal prosecution in US courts, a selective behaviour that suggests that the legal argument is used at convenience. Civil rights organisations are concerned that other prisoners, like Ali Saleh Kahlah al-Marri, who have been subject to criminal prosecution for alleged terrorism-related activities, now face the prospect that the

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694   James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans, The History of the Bush's War Cabinet*, (USA: Penguin Books, 2004): 300, 301

695   'President Pledges Assistance for New York in Phone Call with Pataki, Giuliani', *White House*, (http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010913-4.html, September 13, 2001)

government may take away the privilege of criminal procedure and subject them to indeterminate 'enemy combatant' status should they begin to win their case.[696]

A second step occurs when the challenges to the discourse begin to arise or are likely to arise. Rather than engaging directly, the representatives of the network of power ignore them at this stage. At the same time, the emergence of questions (or their imminent emergence) is compensated with a reinforcement of the discourse. A way of doing so is by creating or rephrasing new elements of the discourse, but there is still not a direct reply to the challenging voices at this point.

In April 2002 Sharon escalated a military conflict in the West Bank. Bush must have known that the actions of his administration back then were to be interpreted as manoeuvres to buy time for the Israeli offensive, and so claims of 'double standards' by the US would inevitably arise. Rather than attempting any answer or explanation, Bush declared Sharon a "man of peace" and attacked Yasser Arafat for his "complicity with terrorism" while omitting any mention of Sharon's personal past as a bellicose leader.[697] New discursive objects and elements were being created: 'men of peace' and their opposition towards terrorist ways. Or rather, a discursive object/theme that was implied by the discourse was being brought to light in a new version in order to reinforce it.

We find a third step when it becomes difficult to ignore the challenges. The first ones to step forward in defence of the discourse are its supporters and commentators in the media, the academy, political parties or other organisations in lower levels than governmental authorities. High level personalities are

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696   'Erosion of Civil Liberties Reflects a "New Normal" in America - not Temporary Sacrifices - since 9/11', *Human Rights First*, (http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/media/2003_alerts/0918.htm, September 18, 2003)

697   James Anderson, 'American Hegemony after 11 September: Allies, Rivals and Contradictions', *Geopolitics*, 8-3 (October 2003): 49

kept out of a direct confrontation at this point. There are many examples of media commentators replying to challenges to the discourse. Many articles in the neoconservative publication *The Weekly Standard* may illustrate the point. The elements of the discourse reinforced by these commentators differ from the ones that we would find at governmental levels in that they have a more narrow audience, even when considerably large. Since their audiences are somewhat specialized they have a certain margin to present their ideas as arguments or research.

One difference with governmental agents is that commentators may allow themselves to speak in more openly, provocative and controversial ways. Consider Charles Krauthammer's 2005 article written as a response to a debate in the US Senate about torture. The article provoked many intense reactions for its attempt at justifying some cases of torture; its relevance here is the way in which his arguments represented an attempt to defend and reinforce the discourse on terrorism. The following paragraph is entirely composed of discursive themes already identified in previous chapters:

> Breaking the laws of war and abusing civilians are what, to understate the matter vastly, terrorists do for a living. They are entitled, therefore, to (no rights). Anyone who blows up a car bomb in a market deserves to spend the rest of his life roasting on a spit over an open fire. But we don't do that because we do not descend to the level of our enemy. We don't do that because, unlike him, we are civilized. Even though terrorists are entitled to no humane treatment, we give it to them because it is in our nature as a moral and humane people. And when on rare occasions we fail to do that, as has occurred in several of the fronts of the war on terror, we are duly disgraced.[698]

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698   Charles Krauthammer, 'The Truth about Torture', *The Weekly Standard*,
(http://weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/006/400rhqav.asp, December 5, 2005)

In the above fragment we find an articulation of the theme of the opposition between 'us' as moral, righteous and civilized, and 'them' as barbaric and deserving punishment.

A fourth step takes place when the authorities give responses. At first they are limited, usually in the context of press conferences where journalists directly ask about the current 'hot' topic in the news. It should be noted that long before the debate has reached them, government officials have been quite aware of it. In May 2005 the then secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld opined that a new challenge in time of war was dealing with global media that could instantly spread information that could be false or damaging to US interests. He lamented that modern media, such as the Internet, had "no inhibitions" and "a seemingly casual disregard for the protection of classified information, resulting in a near continuous haemorrhage of classified documents, to the detriment of the country".[699] What we see here is a complaint from a member of the network of power about a lack of a de facto censorship mechanism and the difficulty of dealing with the damage ("haemorrhage") suffered by the discourse.

When these personalities are finally forced to give direct responses, they usually do so in the form of simple discursive objects or short themes not unlike slogans. There is a noticeable lack of an attempt to provide complex arguments. In a May 2005 news conference, Bush responded to an Amnesty International report that compared the detention camp in Guantanamo to a Soviet-era gulag by declaring: "It's an absurd allegation. The United States is a country that promotes freedom around the world." The report, he said, was flawed because it was based on allegations that were made by prisoners "who hate America".[700] When asked two years earlier to explain the looting and chaos in

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699   David B. Caruso, 'Rumsfeld Laments Global Reach of War News', *Yahoo! News*,
(http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20050526/ap_on_go_ca_st_pe/rumsfeld_media_5, May 26, 2005)
700   Terence Hunt, 'Bush Calls Human Rights Report 'Absurd'', *Yahoo! News*,

occupied Iraq, Rumsfeld said: "Freedom's untidy, and free people are free to make mistakes and commit crimes and do bad things... They're also free to live their lives and do wonderful things. And that's what's going to happen here... Stuff happens".[701]

Perhaps this insistence on simplicity is an attempt at promoting the sacred atmosphere that surrounds some political leaders and their discourse. Or perhaps what is being suggested is that the 'truth' is reasonable, self-evident and simple, and so the questions should be regarded as irrelevant or ill intended; that the discourse is 'common sense'.

There are other examples of replies by authorities which have a higher degree of complexity, and may be considered a second phase of the fourth strategy. These do not occur in the context of press conferences or improvised answers, but rather as official reports or analyses. Sometimes the reports accept a limited amount of mistakes or wrongdoings, but there is a reinforcement of the notion that these actions are necessary or unavoidable evils, or exceptions to the rule ('a few bad apples') that are taken care of through trustworthy legal procedures. The notion that the circumstances are to blame and not the intrinsic contradictions of the discourse is suggested by the formality of the investigation of the events in conjunction with declarations by the representatives of the network of power (the principles of *discipline* and *author*). For example, the Naval Criminal Investigative Service completed a report that collected evidence of a massacre of 24 Iraqi civilians in Haditha in November 2005 by US Marines who were reported to deliberately target unarmed women and children.[702] Before the report was

(http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20050531/ap_on_go_pr_wh/bush, May 31, 2005)

701   Sean Loughlin, 'Rumsfeld on looting in Iraq: 'Stuff happens'', *CNN*,

(http://www.cnn.com/2003/US/04/11/sprj.irq.pentagon/, April 12, 2003)

702   Robert Burns, 'Haditha Report Could Implicate Marines', *ABC News*,

(http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/wireStory?id=2265583&CMP=OTC-RSSFeeds0312, August 2, 2006)

complete, the White House spokesman Tony Snow emphasized that the inquiry was "a very vigorous one", that the Marines in charge of it were proceeding "very seriously" and "very aggressively", and that allegations from a journalist that there had been "foot dragging" or a "cover-up" were prejudices.[703] The suggestion that the case was being taken care of lawfully and professionally implies that examples of unlawfulness should not be expected to be found within the US military, and if there were any they would be exceptional.

These more complex replies may also appear not as reports or analyses but as the natural result of a long chain of repetition of a few simplistic declarations to the point where they become generally accepted as the best explanation that common sense can offer. We know that the discursive objects and themes have reached a point of critical mass when the media begin to present them as more or less self-evident. The media never took seriously Rumsfeld's declaration that the chaos of Iraq could be explained because "stuff happens"; however, at some point most of them did accept the explanation that most acts of violence were the product of Al-Qaeda in Iraq, allegedly commanded by Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi until his death in 2006.[704] Likewise, it was later believed that the increasing violence was a nascent "civil war" between Iraqi Shia and Sunni communities.[705] The point is not if these explanations are correct or not, but rather that they have appeared as simple discursive objects and themes. Like manageable objects or tools, the explanations may be summarized in short phrases and inserted in different texts or speeches.

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703   'Press Briefing by Tony Snow, White House, (http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/05/20060531-4.html, May 31, 2006)

704   See for an example: 'Profile: Abu Musab al-Zarqawi', *BBC News*, (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3483089.stm, November 10, 2005)

705   See for an example: Lara Logan, 'Undeclared Civil War in Iraq', *CBS News*, (http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2005/09/26/eveningnews/main886305.shtml, September 26, 2005)

It is important to point out that the discourse shifts and adapts itself to new circumstances and challenges, while still retaining its essential assumptions. Before and during the first stages of the war on Iraq, the Bush administration insisted that there was a link between Al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein.[706] Two years later, long after the fact and when it was a commonplace that this was incorrect, the link morphed into one of a sharing of resentment. Bush was asked by a reporter what the attacks on the World Trade Centre had to do with Iraq, to which he replied:

> Nothing, except for it's part of – and nobody has ever suggested in this administration that Saddam Hussein ordered the attack. Iraq was a – the lesson of September the 11th is, take threats before they fully materialize, Ken. Nobody has ever suggested that the attacks of September the 11th were ordered by Iraq. I have suggested, however, that resentment and the lack of hope create the breeding grounds for terrorists who are willing to use suiciders to kill to achieve an objective.[707]

Similarly, a discursive object morphed while keeping its essence when in August 2006 the enemy in the war on terrorism – until this point "Islamic extremists", "radicals" or simply "terrorists" – became linked for a while to the idea of "fascism", in an apparent conscious and strategic choice of words, since the President, the Secretary of Defence and the White House spokesman all made public use of it.[708]

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706   'Bush stands by al Qaeda, Saddam link', *CNN*,
(http://www.cnn.com/2004/WORLD/meast/06/15/bush.alqaeda/index.html, June 15, 2004)
707   'Press Conference by the President', White House,
(http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/08/20060821.html, August 21, 2006)
708   Tom Raum, 'The enemy now is 'fascism'', *Associated Press*,

There is a fifth step which takes place in parallel to the rest. It is difficult to assess because of its nature: the use of covert manipulation of information. In late 2005 it was revealed that the US Department of Defence had paid large amounts of money to buy space in Iraqi newspapers to place "deliberately one-sided stories written by US "psy-ops" troops." The Pentagon had a $100m contract with the Lincoln Group, a "business intelligence" company for this purpose. The US military hid its involvement while the Lincoln Group staff paid Iraqi journalists to write stories about US forces and the Iraqi government which ignored any negative aspects of the occupation.[709] A scandal in the US followed the revelation about the work of the Lincoln Group. Bush reacted by commenting that he was "very troubled" while Rumsfeld promised an investigation.[710] It is reasonable to assume that other similar cases have taken place without the knowledge of the public, thus the difficulty of assessing the extent and implications of the strategy.

We do have knowledge of other cases that reveal the existence of a strategy of covert vectoring of information. The American Civil Liberties Union revealed that two Oakland police officers working undercover infiltrated the anti-war movement in May 2003 in an effort to influence the demonstrations and "direct them to do something that we want them to do", in the words of the Deputy Police Chief. The undercover agents were even elected into positions of leadership within the movement. The ACLU had also reported cases of spying in Santa Cruz and Fresno.[711] That authorities utilize these techniques is significant not just for the production and domination of discourse but also as 'technologies of

(http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/news/nation/15401745.htm, August 31, 2006)

709   'So, just who is Christian Bailey?', *The Independent*,
(http://news.independent.co.uk/world/americas/article333629.ece, December 17, 2005)

710   Patrick Foster and Tim Reid, 'Godalming geek made millions running the Pentagon's propaganda war in Iraq', *Times Online*, (http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,11069-1958479,00.html, December 24, 2005)

711   Demian Bulwa, 'Police spies chosen to lead war protest', *San Francisco Chronicle*, (http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2006/07/28/SURVEILLANCE.TMP, July 28, 2006)

discipline' in the same category of surveillance.

What these strategies of response reveal is that the discourse is fluid. It shifts and changes according to circumstances; it recreates itself in regards to the threats coming from the outside; it determines its limits and reinforces its version of 'common sense' by contrasting (repressing, negating, antagonising) the alternatives. It is in this sense that through the social antagonism it produces, its condition of possibility is simultaneously the condition of its impossibility.

2.1 *Challenging narratives as madness and immorality*

The strategies described above come about in response to indictments against the way in which the war on terrorism has been carried out and its consequences, but in general the critics tend to accept a need for counter-terrorism as a just and natural answer to the attacks of September 11, 2001, and others. Thus, although the alternative narratives are to be found in Laclau's *constitutive outside*, they can still share some basic assumptions and principles with the hegemonic discourse. For example, it is possible to criticise the war on terrorism on the basis of recovering the 'true' American identity and its special place in the world by embracing the values of justice and democracy, and therefore still accepting where the oneness and otherness are placed.

Nevertheless, there are other less frequent charges, aimed against the reporting of the basic assumed facts of terrorist attacks, which seek to invalidate the righteousness of the war on terrorism. The discourse places these indictments well further into the constitutive outside, away from what is reasonable and into the realm of madness. I noted in chapter 1 Foucault's observations on the subject, which are of relevance here. Since the Middle Ages, he writes, the words of the madman are considered

null and void, and lacking any truth or importance; however, his speech may be attributed with the power of uttering hidden truths through a naivety that sees what others cannot.[712] I also pointed out that for our subject – and for present day society in general – the attributes of the madman include that which is disqualified for being in radical opposition to the hegemonic discourse. We should think of madness in a figurative sense and substitute it for 'fringe', 'ignorant', 'unreasonable' or 'extremist'. Those who speak today from outside the discourse resemble the madman of the Middle Ages in their attraction of a limited number of listeners who believe in their power of 'uttering truths' that conventional wisdom has apparently overlooked.

While the democratic ideal of freedom of speech will make it difficult for anyone to be openly punished for speaking against the dominant discourse, there are negative social outcomes for those who cross a certain limit. In the context of the war on terrorism there are categories that take the place that was once reserved for mad men, perhaps the most clear example for this context being the discursive object of the 'conspiracy theorist' – apart from the terrorist himself.

In terms of discourse, both conspiracy theorists and terrorists find themselves on the fringe of the constitutive outside, since they cannot be reduced into, or merged with, the hegemonic discourse in a Hegelian synthesis in any way. The difference is that the discourse of the terrorist automatically reinforces the hegemonic discourse and grants it credibility by virtue of confirmation. As such, it represents no threat or challenge to the hegemony; it can never replace the dominant discourse, nor has it got any real potential of expansion within US society. While it does not share the central assumptions of the hegemonic discourse, it shares the same logic by creating a mirror image of it. Terrorism, its

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712   Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse', in R. Young (ed.), *Untying the text: A Post-Structuralist Reader* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1981): 53

discourse and its identity are in fact a necessity for the existence of the hegemonic discourse. The discourse of conspiracy, on the other hand, represents a challenge, even if limited, in as much as the hegemonic discourse loses all credibility among their subscribers. It also has a limited potential of expansion within US society, as it shares some widely accepted human values of the good of 'truth', 'justice', 'democracy' or the possibility of living in a 'better society'. Although unlikely, in principle conspiracy theories could be accepted as 'common sense' among larger segments of society in the future.

The term 'conspiracy theory' carries an emotional charge that is often enough to exempt the supporters of the discourse from replying directly to its allegations. This term and others also clearly mark the issues that are out of bounds; perhaps this is what Foucault meant by the "wild exteriority"[713] – "wild" not because they are *a priori* unreasonable but because they lie out of boundaries and virtually out of sight, where the rules of the discourse do not apply. It is thus assumed that no dialogue is possible, or necessary, since the discourse does not regard them as worthy of it.

The conspiracy issues that usually get appellations equivalent to 'madness' sometimes seek to insert themselves in a historical narrative to establish a foundation for their validity, for the establishment of their rationality is what they most need. They are sometimes made in explicit or implicit reference to selected reported events about how Western governments or governments considered democratic have covertly and deceptively taken part in acts of violence against civilians in the past for reasons of power, especially if they targeted 'democratic' or Western societies, even their own, with the implication that this may be common practice, albeit largely unknown to the general public, and easily objectified as

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713   Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse': 61

'terrorist'. Dominant discourses in Western societies may tolerate some limited discussion of such events as long as they are considered exceptions but not common practices. For example, it has been reported that in 1954 the Israeli Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI) carried out an operation aimed at preventing the withdrawal of British forces from the Suez Canal Zone, what was later known as the "Unfortunate Business" and the Lavon Affair. A network of Egyptian Jews in Cairo and Alexandria, headed by an Israeli agent, would have perpetrated acts of sabotage against Egyptian and American installations in both cities. Apparently, the idea was to show that Egypt was not capable of maintaining law and order in its own territory while concealing the Israeli involvement, demonstrating the risks implied for Western security interests in withdrawing from the Canal Zone and relying on the Egyptian regime.[714] The very phrase "unfortunate business" constructs the event as exceptional and unintended.

Other reported historical examples which are 'out of bounds' for the discourse of the war on terrorism and other dominant discourses of Western culture as civilized and rational are: the case of Russia in 1999, when Federal Security Service agents were reported to be caught by local police planting bombs under a working class apartment building after previous attacks had been blamed on Chechens[715]; a 1969 explosion in Milan, blamed on anarchists but reportedly perpetrated by neo-fascists with the help of elements of the Italian secret service[716]; and a 1960s US government proposal, "Operation

714   Uri-Bar Joseph, *Intelligence Intervention in the Politics of Democratic States: The United States, Israel and Britain*, (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995): 149-151

715   David Satter, 'The Shadow of Ryazan: Who Was Behind the Strange Russian Apartment Bombings in September 1999?', *Project on Systemic Change and International Security in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, (http://www.sais-jhu.edu/programs/res/papers/Satter_edited_final.pdf, The Hudson Institute, The Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, 19 April 2002); John Sweeney, 'Take care, Tony, this man has blood on his hands', *Observer*, (http://www.guardian.co.uk/Archive/Article/0,4273,3973053,00.html, March 12, 2000)

716   Thomas Sheehan, 'Italy: Terror on the Right', *The New York Review of Books*,

Northwoods", that had the written approval of all the Joint Chiefs of Staff but was rejected by the civilian leadership, which suggested assassinating Cuban exiles, sinking boats of refugees, hijacking planes, blowing up a US ship and orchestrating fake Communist Cuban terrorist campaigns in cities in Florida and in Washington for the purpose of generating public and international support for military action against Fidel Castro.[717]

Occasional mention or indirect references to these reported events serve as historical context for discussions about the validity of the basic facts of the major terrorist attacks since 2001. There is a considerable number of authors – almost entirely confined to the World Wide Web, although some have also published printed material – who challenge the official explanations of September 11, 2001 and other subsequent attacks, such as the ones in Madrid and London, with the implication that Western governments allowed them to happen or were indirectly or directly complicit. Among others, David Ray Griffin, a professor at the Claremont School of Theology in California, published a book in 2004 posing a series of challenges to the version of events proposed by the authorities, including the report of the *National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*, generally known as the 9/11 Commission. His arguments range from alleged physical impossibilities to unlikely coincidences and security failures.[718] He was partly inspired by a French journalist, Thierry Meyssan, who had previously written against the claim that American Airlines Flight 77 had hit the Pentagon, based on the photographic analysis of the damage of the site and the lack of debris identifiable as a passenger

(http://www.nybooks.com/articles/7178, 22 January 1981)

717   David Ruppe, 'US Military Wanted to Provoke War With Cuba', *ABC News*, (http://abcnews.go.com/US/story?id=92662, May 1, 2001); 'Pentagon Proposed Pretexts for Cuba Invasion in 1962', *The National Security Archive* (http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/news/20010430/, April 30, 2001)

718   David Ray Griffin, *The New Pearl Harbor, Disturbing Questions about the Bush Administration and 9/11*, (Arris Books, 2004)

plane.[719] The allegations became part of discussions on the Internet as they became popularized by video presentations available for download that summarized the arguments of the above authors and others with visual material.[720] Such recent video and audio web technologies have stimulated what is often referred to in Internet sites as *The 9/11 Truth Movement*. However, if it is a movement as such, it is far from uniform. Many web authors have joined the debate since 2001 with sometimes similar, sometimes opposing views on what took place, how and why. The common characteristic they all share is a varying degree of skepticism about the official account of events and the motives of the war on terrorism. The fact that some of the positions of these authors are dissimilar is just a confirmation that they grow on a terrain where the rules of a dominant discourse do not apply: a "wild exteriority".

All of the above may be considered arguments of 'conspiracy theorists', but that is not the only type of challenging 'mad men' to which the network of power producing the discourse may react. Statements, arguments or analyses that criticize the actions of the state of Israel or its relationship with the US, though not necessarily directed against the war on terrorism *per se*, are often also 'out of bounds', a fact that suggests that the stated sympathy of neoconservatives to the state of Israel is central to their world view, and that the current discourse on terrorism, as the latest version of US identity based on the us/them dichotomy, has been somewhat successful in incorporating neoconservative specific ideals. The focus of criticisms is on the two countries' joint struggle for power in the Middle East and its consequences, accusations which imply immorality or contradiction. If the criticisms are strong enough, they may be referred to as 'anti-semitic' – another appellation carrying an emotional content similar to 'madness' – even if they emerge from a work widely accepted as valid under academic

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719   Thierry Meyssan, *9/11 The Big Lie*, (USA: Carnot)

720   For example: "Pentagon Strike: What hit the Pentagon on 9/11?", http://www.pentagonstrike.co.uk/ ; 'Loose Change', http://www.loosechange911.com/index.htm

standards. When John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt wrote an article[721] on the influence of the Israel lobby on US foreign policy, it did not matter that they made a distinction between the group of influence promoting an expansionist agenda of Israel and the Jewish people; nor that their work followed academic conventions of research. Their article made the headlines because it was accused of 'anti-semitism' - mostly by members of the Israel lobby itself.[722] The accusation of anti-semitism as a strategy to discredit was already described and foreseen in their article.[723]

Sometimes a challenger of the discourse is called both a 'conspiracy theorist' and an 'anti-semite', if he discusses an alleged illegal or immoral act committed in secrecy by members of the state of Israel or one or more Jews. In a mirror image of the link between pro-Israel ideals and the US discourse on terrorism, some of the Internet authors that deal with the attacks of September 11, 2001, argue that a piece of evidence pointing to Israeli foreknowledge or involvement was the reported arrest on the morning of that day of five Israelis who were found celebrating while filming the collapse of the World Trade Center. At least two of them were allegedly working for Mossad, Israel's secret service. Atypically for *Fox News*, a traditional supporter of the war on terrorism, it followed the story of the Israeli spies; apparently, 140 Israelis were detained prior to September 11, 2001, as part of a widespread investigation into a suspected espionage ring that sought to penetrate government facilities; after the attacks, another 60 were taken into custody. Carl Cameron reported that a source told him that

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721   John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, 'The Israel lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy' (Working Paper), *The John F. Kennedy School of Government*, (March 2006): 14. An edited and reworked version was published in the *London Review of Books*, 28-6 (www.lrb.co.uk, March 23, 2006)

722   Julian Borger, 'US professors accused of being liars and bigots over essay on pro-Israeli lobby', *The Guardian*, (http://education.guardian.co.uk/higher/news/story/0,,1743769,00.html, March 31, 2006)

723   This is not to say that charges of anti-semitism are never used against those who have non-academic or unjustified arguments against Jewish people. However, attacks largely perceived as prejudiced do not pose a challenge to the discourse, while researched academic articles do.

there were "tie-ins" between the Israelis and the attacks.[724] Eventually *Fox News* withdrew the report from its website, an indication that this was retrospectively recognized as a inconsistency in the production of the discourse. While this is an example of a reported event which has reached the public only through a series of filters that make it difficult to determine any degree of certainty about the extent or purpose of the alleged Israeli operation (and in any case it is beyond the purpose and focus of this chapter), the fact that this was a largely ignored story and is now forgotten by the global media is proof of the effectiveness of a discourse that allows only the existence of Arab or Muslim conspiracies. Had the people celebrating been Arab the report would have most probably been treated differently. But by its very nature it was in the "wild exteriority" as it had no way of being incorporated into the discourse; thus its withdrawal from *Fox News*.

Once again, the objective here is not to determine if the above allegations contradicting the hegemonic discourse are factually correct or incorrect, but to establish the fact that they represent a challenge from the constitutive outside of the discourse, that they represent possible grounds on which to construct multiple alternative discourses (demonstrating that the current version of the discourse was not logically inevitable), and to examine how the dominant discourse deals with them when necessary.

To some extent, the strategies followed by the network of power are similar to the ones that take place as response to more popularly accepted indictments. As such, the hegemonic discourse proves again to

724   Neil Mackay, 'Five Israelis were seen filming as jet liners ploughed into the Twin Towers on September 11, 2001', Sunday Herald, (http://ww1.sundayherald.com/37707, November 3, 2003) ; 'Fox News: Israel Spying on the US', *Arutz Sheva, IsraelNationalNews.com*, (http://www.israelnationalnews.com/news.php3?id=15391) . The report by Carl Cameron can no longer be found in the Fox News website, but a copy of the text can be found in http://cryptome.org/fox-il-spy.htm . A copy of the video report may be watched online on 'Exposing Israel's Blatant Spying and Involvement in 9-11', *Signs of the Times*, (http://www.signs-of-the-times.org/articles/show/133831-Exposing+Israel%27s+Blatant+Spying+and+Involvement+in+9-11, 6 June 2007)

be dynamic in its recreation and repression of the alternatives. There are differences when it deals with a challenge from the fringe, however. The responses to the questions from the far constitutive outside occur much less frequently. This is due to the much smaller number of authors positioning themselves radically in the exteriority. If a response is necessary, it is usually implied that a brief dismissal would do, since the allegations are deemed to be irrational for placing themselves so far away from the 'common sense'.

However, and in spite of the seemingly limited appeal of the debate, it appears to have had an effect on the perceptions of the population, thus presenting a genuine challenge to the dominant discourse. According to a poll by *The New York Times* and *CBS News*, 53% of US citizens think the Bush administration is hiding something about the September 11, 2001 attacks and 28% believe it is lying. Only 16% believe it is telling the truth about what it knew before the attacks.[725]

On November 10, 2001, George W. Bush used a first strategy, which we may again call 'preemptive', against speculation of conspiracies. Speaking to the UN General Assembly he remarked:

> We must speak the truth about terror. Let us never tolerate outrageous conspiracy theories concerning the attacks of September the 11th; malicious lies that attempt to shift the blame away from the terrorists, themselves, away from the guilty.[726]

Thus, even before alternative explanations of the facts were proposed, it was already established that

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725   See 'Americans Question Bush on 9/11 Intelligence', *Angus Reid Consultants*, (http://www.angus-reid.com/polls/index.cfm/fuseaction/viewItem/itemID/13469, October 14, 2006)

726   'President Bush Speaks to United Nations', *White House*, (http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/11/20011110-3.html, November 10, 2001)

doing so would be "outrageous" and "malicious". The fringe of the constitutive outside was being set, albeit vaguely at this point. The use of the word "malicious" is significant as it determined that questioning the basic facts would not only be irrational; it would also be ill-intended and therefore immoral. Immoral is an added element to 'madness', as the mad man is not by definition immoral since he is not responsible for his condition.

Some time later the 9/11 Commission published its report with "a full and complete account of the circumstances surrounding the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, including preparedness for and the immediate response to the attacks" that would leave no doubt about the accepted limits of the factual foundations of the discourse.[727] This report achieved little in terms of discouraging the questions from the exteriority. In response, Griffin wrote a new book dedicated specifically to it.[728]

We find that when an official response is required the authorities produce reports assumed to be impartial, professional and scientific thanks to the reputation of the creators (the principle of the *author*), in this case the five Democrats and five Republicans headed by Thomas Kean, the former governor of New Jersey, and Philip D. Zelikow, who worked with Condoleezza Rice in the National Security Council in the George H. W. Bush administration and in the Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board under George W. Bush. It was indeed a *response*: the probe on the attacks was originally meant to be confined to the Congress; it was only after relatives of the victims pressed for an independent commission focused on intelligence failures that the 9/11 Commission was created.[729]

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727   'National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States', (http://www.9-11commission.gov/)

728   David Ray Griffin, *The 9/11 Commission Report: Omissions And Distortions*, (Olive Branch Press, 2005)

729   '9-11 Relatives Grill Bush Administration', *CBS News*, (http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2002/09/20/national/main522682.shtml, September 19, 2002); 'Bush Backs Independent 9-11 Probe', *CBS News*, (http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2002/09/24/attack/main523156.shtml)

As a general rule the network of power has not needed to respond in any way, since the implicit idea that extreme questions are 'conspiracy theories' or 'urban legends' works as an *a priori* refutation. There have been exceptions, though. We notice that replies come firstly and more often from the media than the authorities themselves, and even then they are only occasional.

On one of such occasions, professor of Islamic Studies Kevin Barrett of Wisconsin University was interviewed on *Hanity & Colmes* on *Fox News*. Barrett argues that there is enough physical evidence to sustain the idea that the attacks of September 11, 2001, were the product of an "inside job". The interview took place because Barrett had the intention of dedicating a week of his university course to discussing these theories. It is revealing to compare the way both sides, the *Fox News* commentators and Barrett, attempt to argue in favor of their views. While Barrett contends that he has looked at "overwhelming evidence" for a controlled demolition of the Twin Towers and asks the viewers to look at it themselves[730], Sean Hannity replies:

> The evidence is overwhelming to you because you are a conspiracy nut... The question is whether or not you are the most competent to teach (the students), and most people think you are a nut... Reasonable people see you as an extremist, and I don't think you are the most appropriate guy to teach that class.[731]

This is an interesting case because we find a university professor – who in different circumstances

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730   Barrett was making reference to Physics Professor Steven E. Jones's research on the three buildings of the WTC that collapsed that can be found in the website of '9/11 Scholars for Truth', http://www.st911.org

731   '9/11 Scholars for Truth Professor Kevin Barrett on Hanity & Colmes'. TV interview. *Fox News*, (July 10, 2006). An online video of the interview may be watched at http://www.infowars.com/articles/sept11/kevin_barrett_st911_hanity_colmes.htm

would be considered a reliable source and perhaps even an expert on his field – being portrayed in exactly opposite terms. What the contrast in value given to some university professors over others reveals is that reliable authors are only so as long as they speak from within the hegemonic discourse.

Another telling element is that Hannity calls Barrett an "extremist". Extremism and radicalism, as opposed to wisdom and sensibility, carry a value of both madness and immorality, as is shown by the common use of the terms to refer to terrorists. Thus, Hannity is implying a moral link between discussions of conspiracies and terrorism itself. Once again the issue appears to be not just irrationality but immorality as well.

Wisconsin University has been under pressure for allowing Barrett to teach his course. According to its website, more than 1,000 e-mails and calls from citizens, as well as numerous news reports and editorials have been issued on the subject.[732] State Representative Steve Nass proposed a Legislative resolution condemning Barrett's employment which was endorsed by 52 members of the Assembly and nine members of the Senate,[733] while the Anti-Defamation League complained about Barrett's conspiracy theories "which often take on anti-Semitic and anti-American overtones" and a course which "ill-serves students".[734] The University allowed Barrett to continue with his course[735]; however

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732   'The Kevin Barrett case at UW-Madison', *Wisconsin University* (http://www.news.wisc.edu/barrettissue/, December 8, 2006)

733   State Rep. Steve Nass, 'Legislative Resolution Relating to: condemning the conspiracy theory of lecturer Kevin Barrett and his employment by the University of Wisconsin-Madison', *Wisconsin University* (http://www.news.wisc.edu/barrettissue/docs/0712nassresolutionbarretta.pdf, July 12, 2006); State Rep. Steve Nass, 'Letter to Governor James Doyle', *Wisconsin University*, (http://www.news.wisc.edu/barrettissue/docs/0724nassgovletter.pdf, July 24, 2006)

734   'Wisconsin Instructor's 9/11 Conspiracy Theories ill-serve Students', *Anti-Defamation League*, (http://www.adl.org/PresRele/HolNa_52/4905_52.htm, October 11, 2006)

735   'Provost review clears Barrett to teach class on Islam', *Wisconsin University*,

University Provost Patrick Farrell issued a letter warning Barrett that "if you continue to identify yourself with UW-Madison in your personal political messages" on the subject of the September 11, 2001 attacks, "or illustrate an inability to control your interest in publicity for your ideas, I would lose confidence that your assurances with regard to the course can be believed."[736] I point to these developments around Barrett as evidence of the potential of the hegemonic discourse to produce disciplinary and material (i.e. practical) consequences on the proponents of alternative views, such as losing a job.

This possibility is also suggested by the case of Physics professor Steven E. Jones, who published a paper proposing that the WTC buildings collapsed as a result of a controlled demolition.[737] In the fall of 2006, Brigham Young University and Jones finalized a retirement package, six weeks after the school placed the physicist on paid leave to review his statements and research about the attacks. Jones declared that he elected to retire in order to "spend more time speaking and conducting research of my own choosing".[738]

It is significant that Hannity's vehemence against proponents of conspiracies has been shared by some 'left-wing' critics of the Bush administration, showing that some of their unstated core discursive assumptions overlap with those of the discourse of the war on terrorism. British columnist George

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(http://www.news.wisc.edu/12701.html, July 10, 2006)

736   'Letter from Provost Farrell to Kevin Barrett', *Wisconsin University*,

(http://www.news.wisc.edu/barrettissue/docs/0720farrellbarrett.pdf, 20 July, 2006)

737   Steven E. Jones, 'Why Indeed Did the WTC Buildings Completely Collapse?', *Journal of 9/11 Studies*, 3

(http://www.journalof911studies.com/volume/200609/Why_Indeed_Did_the_WTC_Buildings_Completely_Collapse_Jones
_Thermite_World_Trade_Center.pdf, September 2006)

738   'BYU professor in dispute over 9/11 will retire', *Deseret Morning News*

(http://deseretnews.com/dn/view/0,1249,650200587,00.html, October 21, 2006)

Monbiot calls the conspiracy film *Loose Change*[739] a virus that "infects opponents of the Bush government, sucks their brains out through their eyes and turns them into gibbering idiots".[740] In a follow-up article he calls them "conspiracy idiots" and "morons", and accuses them of destroying popular opposition campaigns; thus, both accusations of irrationality and immorality (albeit from the perspective of left-wing morality) appear here as well.[741] What is noteworthy is not Monbiot's intellectual disagreement with conspiracy theories, but rather that his words are harsher than those used against his usual targets, such as transnational corporations or the US administration. In his words we find a confirmation of the far externality of discussions of conspiracies.

Mass media have at least once attempted to defend the hegemonic discourse from the challenge of the fringe constitutive outside by appealing to science; the principle of *discipline*, to use Foucault's terminology, which is common to all scientific discourse. The March 2005 issue of *Popular Mechanics* featured a long article to counter "16 of the most prevalent claims made by conspiracy theorists". According to the editors, the theories were debunked "with hard evidence and a healthy dose of common sense". Thus, the emphasis lies on the notion that science solves the problem and validates the conclusions (a notion shared in principle by the scholars who oppose the basic facts of the accepted version of 9/11). However, the introduction of the article also identifies the alternative views as "wild", "outlandish", accepted by "extremists" and "curdled into paranoia"[742], again in a reference to the reason/madness and moral/immoral divide, which suggests something other than a mere interest in

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739   'Loose Change', http://www.loosechange911.com/index.htm

740   George Monbiot, 'A 9/11 conspiracy virus is sweeping the world, but it has no basis in fact', *The Guardian*, (http://www.guardian.co.uk/Columnists/Column/0,,2006830,00.html, February 6, 2007)

741   George Monbiot, '9/11 fantasists pose a mortal danger to popular opposition campaigns', *The Guardian* (http://www.guardian.co.uk/Columnists/Column/0,,2017005,00.html, February 20, 2007)

742   '9/11: Debunking the Myths', *Popular Mechanics*, (http://www.popularmechanics.com/science/defense/1227842.html, March 2005)

scientific truth, perhaps the *will to power* observed by Foucault as a constant of discourse.[743] Apparently, the response to the article was so overwhelming that *Popular Mechanics* expanded the investigation and published it in a book.[744]

In some rare occasions representatives of the government have been forced to respond themselves. Reporters asked Pentagon spokeswoman Victoria Clarke about Meyssan's book in June, 2002. She replied:

> (I)t's disgusting ...we're coming up on the anniversary of the day in which over 3,000 people were slaughtered. And there are over 3,000 families and countless friends who are still, you know, in shock and their lives in disarray because of what happened. There is no question, there is no doubt what happened that day. And I think it's appalling that anyone might try to put out that kind of myth. I think it's also appalling for anyone to continue to give those sorts of people any kind of publicity... It's much more than insulting.[745]

Clarke's response does not really address Meyssan's allegations, but rather describes them as an "insult" and a "myth", implying their irrationality but again emphasizing their immorality ("disgusting",

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743   Edward W. Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, (London-Boston: Faber and Faber, 1983-1984), 216

744   David Dunbar and Brad Reagan, eds., *Debunking 9/11 Myths: Why Conspiracy Theories Can't Stand Up to the Facts* (New York: Hearst Books, 2006). Indeed, many of the articles with allegations against the official account appeared as a response to the Popular Mechanics article or made reference and criticisms to it. Among others, the research mentioned by Barret: Steven E. Jones, 'Why Indeed Did the WTC Buildings Collapse?', *Department of Physics and Astronomy*, Brigham Young University (http://www.physics.byu.edu/research/energy/htm7.html) and independent writer Joe Quinn, 'Evidence that a Frozen Fish Didn't Impact the Pentagon on 9/11 – and Neither Did a Boeing 757', *Signs of the Times* (http://signs-of-the-times.org/signs/Above_Top_Secret_article.htm)

745   'Transcript: Defense Department Briefing, June 25', *US Embassy Australia*, (http://usembassy-australia.state.gov/hyper/2002/0625/epf201.htm, June 25, 2002)

"appalling"), and therefore the lack of need for any further comment. It was not until later, in 2005, that a brief refutation against the allegations themselves appeared on the US Department of State information website citing mostly the 9/11 Commission Report and media articles.[746] Presumably, this last quiet and semi-official response was necessary because the issue of the attack on the Pentagon is still actively discussed in web forums; yet it was not necessary to give a formal reply since the subject remains in the fringe of the constitutive outside, mass media already respond when needed and the debate is followed by only a limited number of people.

Again, with the discursive reactions to the fringe we confirm that the hegemonic discourse is capable of shifting its elements and positions in order to provide replies and negate the identity of the alternatives; in doing so it reinforces its 'common sense'. But when dealing with a challenge from the far constitutive outside, it adds new discursive elements: madness and immorality. This way it affirms itself as the locus of reason and morality.

Slavoj Zizek's has elaborated the concept of social antagonism and his views have proven to be helpful in explaining its role as constitutive of social identity.

> The point is not that 'we' are nothing but the drive to annihilate the antagonistic force that prevents us from achieving our full identity. Rather, the antagonistic force is held responsible for the blockage of our constitutive lack as subjects to the negating Other, which thus becomes the positive embodiment of our self-blockage (1990a: 253). As a result our political actions will

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746   'Did a Plane hit the Pentagon? French Conspiracy Theorist Claims it Did Not', *US Department of State*, International Information Programs (http://usinfo.state.gov/media/Archive/2005/Jun/28-581634.html, June 28, 2005, updated May 17, 2006)

tend to be guided by the illusion that the annihilation of the antagonistic force will permit us to become the fully constituted 'we' that we have always sought to be."[747]

This explains why criticisms of the war on terrorism and conspiracy theories are accused not only of madness but also of immorality; it is in this way that the outside is held responsible for the lack of a fully constituted hegemony.

3. Freedom of Speech, Madness, Immorality and Historical Contingency

The link between 'mad' statements and immorality, as well as the responses in general to the constitutive outside, are constructions greatly determined by historical context. At previous times and in different societies the establishment of what was considered rational and moral has shifted. It is Foucault's work which helps us understand historical contingency, as he has observed that Greek classical texts offer a somehow different understanding to ours of 'freedom of speech' or *parrhesia*.[748]

The person who used *parrhesia* did so in a specific social situation of "difference of status between the speaker and his audience... the *parrhesiastes* says something which is dangerous to himself and thus involves a risk".[749] The word had most of the time a positive sense in the classical texts; the speaker was generally considered a truth-teller since putting himself in danger by making uncomfortable statements was a sign of his frankness. In this sense it contrasts with the modern Cartesian conception of evidence, for after Descartes "the coincidence between belief and truth is obtained in a certain

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747   Jacob Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse*: 128, 129

748   Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech* (L.A.: Semiotext(e), 2001): 11-16

749   Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech*: 11

(mental) evidential experience. For the Greeks, however, the coincidence between belief and truth does not take place in a (mental) experience, but in a verbal activity, namely *parrhesia*."[750] Having the truth was determined by the possession of certain moral qualities, mostly the courage of the speaker.[751]

The examples above of accusations of immorality against people who present themselves as speakers of uncomfortable truths seem to suggest the convergence of the *authority* to speak the truth and morality; thus, speaking without authority would be immoral. This is similar to the pejorative sense of *parrhesia* which was less frequent in Greek texts and which consisted in saying any or everything without qualification and irresponsibly, in a sort of 'chattering'.[752] The accusations examined in the examples above, though, go further in identifying 'irresponsible speech' with 'extremism', perhaps because alternative narratives violate a certain implied sanctity of the state and its authority.

In this chapter I have not been using the word 'madness' in a psychiatric sense. I examine political discourse and in political discourse the line dividing madness from rationality is established by the network of power producing the discourse and not by scientific method. Generally speaking those who make accusations of madness do so in a metaphorical sense – although their accusations are often vaguely defined allowing for a long stretch of the metaphor.

I have not intended to imply any criticism of psychiatric notions of madness either. It is, however, interesting to find more than one parallel between Foucault's observations on the history of madness and 'madness' within recent political discourse. The first parallel, already pointed out above, is the

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750   Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech*: 14
751   Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech*: 14-16
752   Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, 13

historical contingency of the attitude towards the 'mad'. Foucault believes that madness as defined by psychiatry has no presocial essence and that there is nothing natural or inevitable about the strategies through which the mad are socially excluded in modern society.[753] The same applies to the discourse of the war on terrorism; nothing natural or inevitable appears to determine what is 'mad' and what is not.

The second parallel is the link between irrationality and immorality observed above. If we are to obtain any guidance from Foucault's historical approach, then it is also specific to certain moments in time and not an essential link. Foucault observes that during its early days, the asylum assumed the moral enterprise of religion, becoming a

> domain of pure morality, of ethical uniformity... The values of family and work, all the acknowledged virtues, now reign in the asylum... There is a primitive morality which is ordinarily not affected even by the worse dementia; it is this morality which both appears and functions in the cure... The asylum reduces differences, represses vices, eliminates irregularities. It denounces everything that opposes the essential virtues of society... The asylum sets itself the task of the homogeneous rule of morality, its rigorous extension to all those who tend to escape from it.[754]

Similarly, the link between madness and immorality (or its treatment as a moral duty) in political discourse may well be specific to the context of the current war on terrorism, although it may also be

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753   Lois McNay, *Foucault, A Critical Introduction*, (UK: Polity Press, 1994): 17

754   Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization, A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, (UK : Routledge, 1967): 257, 258

reinforced by a US ideology that stretches deep into the country's historical foundations.[755] Whether the link may indeed be traced further back in time or not is a matter for further research.

The final parallel springs from David Cooper's introduction to Foucault's *Madness and Civilization*. Cooper writes:

> Foucault makes it quite clear that the invention of madness as a disease is in fact nothing less than a peculiar disease of our civilization. *We choose to conjure up this disease in order to evade a certain moment of our existence – the moment of disturbance*, of penetrating vision into the depths of ourselves, that we prefer to externalize into others. Others are elected to live the chaos that we refuse to confront in ourselves. By this means we escape a certain anxiety, but only at a price that is as immense as it is unrecognized.[756] (Emphasis added.)

To *disturb* is what the claims from the constitutive outside do, particularly those from the fringe. What appears to be disturbed in the case of the war on terrorism is American identity.

4. Conclusions

When approaching the problem of the limits of a discourse and what lies outside, we are forced to contemplate the existence of alternative discourses and discursive hegemony. For this task, the work of Laclau and Mouffe on hegemony and social antagonism proves to be enlightening and a useful

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755   See David Campbell, *Writing Security, United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998)

756   David Cooper, 'Introduction', in Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*: viii

complement to Foucauldian theory. While the theory of social antagonism does not contradict Foucault, limiting ourselves to a strictly Foucauldian framework is insufficient for a full understanding of the subject.

The exercise of examining the discourse of the war on terrorism in its social antagonism – that is at the points where it is forced to offer responses to both popular and fringe challenging narratives – has highlighted the existence of strategies of power that shift, change and adapt according to the specificity of the criticisms. It seems that the potential of a challenge to spread throughout society is what determines the degree and manner of response, if any. Since allegations of conspiracy are not widespread throughout society and unlikely to ever become so, the response towards them is limited, albeit real and identifiable.

Although there is no process of open and direct censorship or prohibition, repression and negation occur discursively through different strategies that depend on the circumstances and the constitutive outside itself. Thus, challenging narratives play a role in the production of the hegemonic discourse, for they force it to constantly adapt and reinvent itself into newer and more convincing forms. In the case of narratives that lie on the far constitutive outside, what the hegemonic discourse produces in response is the accusation of irrationality and immorality, reinforcing by contrast its own rationality and morality.

That challenging the basic assumptions of the discourse of the war on terrorism would be regarded as 'madness' could be expected before engaging in this research; what was less apparent was that 'mad men' are also constructed as immoral. The suggestion is that one requires authority to speak the truth (and authority is always in relation to power); not doing so is to be considered immoral.

Foucault's contributions turn out to be valuable again as we learn from his discussion on *parrhesia* that the activity of freedom of speech against the powerful has been constructed in different ways throughout history. We also gain a sense of historical discursive contingency by making parallels with his observations on the construction of 'madness'. This should serve as a reminder that the discourse of the war on terrorism is embedded in socio-historic specificities.

Foucauldian discourse analysis: one of a number of tools

Essentially, the work of Michel Foucault presents an alternative to the traditional Marxist and classical categories for understanding power, history and society. It favours the analysis of techniques and practices of power at the extremities of society, rather than class struggle or sovereignty. His approach represents a valuable complement to previous theories; but his insistence that we should cut the king's head off, and retain capillary power as the only form worthy of analysis, cripples our ability to fully grasp what has taken place in the case of the United States and the war on terrorism.

There is a network of power that is most directly identifiable as the producer of the discourse on terrorism. It is not strictly a class, but it occupies a privileged position within American society. It is not rigid, monolithic or coherently defined. Its elements change and resonate with each other and the power it holds changes from hand to hand like a currency. While it is immersed and inserted within Foucauldian historical categories – such as overarching discourses of American identity and security, as well as religious and economic ethics and ideals – it can be reasonably traced to very specific names of people and institutions which articulate those grand discourses in a unique way.

Some of the characteristics of a network such as this one do not appear to have been foreseen by Foucault, or were neglected for his preferred ways of understanding power. Such is the case of (a neoconservative) ideology, the use of the 'noble lie', 'spinning' or lies in general, the practice of lobbying, its relationship to a still important category of an economically privileged class with specific interests (e.g. oil), or religion as an element which strengthens geopolitical alliances (Israel – US).

Other elements indeed remain in accordance with Foucault, such as institutions of an academic or intellectual character as elements of power; but in general it can be said that the neoconservative network is not best identified and explained by a Foucauldian approach, while it strongly suggests itself as a central element of the war on terrorism.

Furthermore, Foucauldian discourse theory does not grant adequate importance to socio-historical specificities involving people in power, their interests and their particular use of language. These specificities reveal the weight of agents in the struggle for power and the production of discourse – adding a complementary dimension to cultural and historic discourses of identity. For example, the interest of the network of power in an international agenda focused on the Middle East and with a relatively little attention to comparable cases, such as North Korea, reveals a specific intentionality that goes beyond the general discourse of American identity.

A Foucauldian approach is useful for revealing that a discursive object such as terrorism is produced as 'truth'. However, it falls short in failing to recognize that basic facts and events can and should be considered as objective, even in discourse analysis, for the sake of determining the degree of disproportionality of the discourse, and the possibilities this opens for resistance to the abuse of power. The discourse of the war on terrorism as a case study asks for this recognition, as it provides several examples of a language disproportionate to the available facts: petty criminals with little chance to successfully do any significant damage to society are presented as dangerous terrorist cells that have been dismantled; Iraq is said to be in possession of weapons of mass destruction and in contact with Al Qaeda, and so on.

Foucauldian theory turns out to be helpful for showing that the process of the production of the

discourse is not limited to a series of statements, whether factually true or not, but is also related to underlying principles manifested in the authority of what is generally considered science, the art of government and the disciplines of intelligence and security; the resonance with historical discourses, such as the Cold War; and the symbols and rituals that accompany the messages. However, the discourse of the war on terrorism cannot be fully understood without analyzing the level of practice as part of the discourse itself. Language and practice together confer an additional meaning that neither does separately. In the respect that both are elements of the discourse, we find a departure from Foucault, who would prefer a clear division between the discursive and the extra-discursive. This does not mean that Foucault did not see any relationship between discourse and practice. On the contrary, he insists that the discourse of science and knowledge has been historically linked to practices of discipline, governmentality and biopolitics.

With regard to the concept of biopolitics, it is a useful platform for understanding certain practices of the war on terrorism, and so are Foucault's observations on the Panoptical principle for explaining practices of surveillance. However, the work of Giorgio Agamben on bare life and the camp as a place of exception are more to the point and thus represents a better tool for the revelation of more elements for analysis. The reason appears to be that Foucault was mainly interested in modern Western liberal and democratic societies as objects of analysis and critique, which do not normally resort to authoritarian or draconian practices. Nevertheless, some practices of the war on terrorism, such as torture or humiliation, are closer to what we find only in exceptional situations or non-democratic societies. States of exception are precisely the main concern of Agamben.

Likewise, the work of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe on hegemony and social antagonism proves to be enlightening and a useful complement for Foucauldian theory when approaching the problem of

the limits of an hegemonic discourse, what lies outside and the existence of radical alternatives. While the theory of social antagonism does not contradict Foucault, limiting ourselves to a strictly Foucauldian framework proves insufficient for the purpose. This does not mean that Foucault has no interesting contributions to make on the subject of opposing discourses: his discussion on *parrhesia* shows that the activity of freedom of speech against the powerful has been constructed in different ways throughout history. We also gain a sense of historical discursive contingency by making parallels with his observations on the construction of 'madness'.

Overall, it is important to understand that Foucault never intended to propose a general theory of history and society, nor a universal method for discourse analysis; rather, he expressed what he hoped for his work like this: "I would like my books to be a kind of tool-box which others can rummage through to find a tool..."[757]

Foucault was most of all interested in "historical enquiry, not so much into texts as into the mutually constitutive relations between texts, the human sciences, practices, institutions, bodies and subjectivities."[758] His different works reveal an interest in specific historical subjects: madness, sexuality, discipline, surveillance or the management of population, to name a few. He did not dedicate much space to explaining war, geopolitics or international relations, since these were not the focus of his personal interest. It is unlikely that he hoped for his work to be successfully applied to all of those areas.

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757   Michel Foucault, 'Prisons et asiles dans le mécanisme du pouvoir' in Dits et Ecrits, t. II. (Paris: Gallimard, 1994): 523, 524, quoted in *Foucault Studies* (http://www.foucault-studies.com/, last accessed October 2008)

758   Jan Selby, 'Engaging Foucault: Discourse, Liberal Governance and the Limits of Foucauldian IR', *International Relations*, 21 (2007): 327

The discourse of the war on terrorism involves some aspects related to Foucault's interests, but also others which are not. Discipline or the management of human populations can be discerned in this case study; but we must not forget that the war on terrorism is also an inherently international issue, related to geopolitics as much as economics. Thus, Jan Selby may be correct in his critique of contemporary IR work that seeks to make use of Foucault. He identifies an

> inherently difficulty of internationalising Foucault. For as Kimberley Hutchings observed in an earlier review of Foucault's impact within IR, the 'traditional concerns of international relations theory (war, interstate relations, foreign policy, diplomacy, security) seem a long way from Foucault's preoccupation with the micro-politics of power relations and the constitution and limits of subjectivity'.[759]

The problem is exacerbated by the difficulties of ever reaching a general theory of IR, whether in accordance with Foucault or not, given that, in Colin Wight's words, "the international political system is a complex, chaotic and essentially open system that is causally overdetermined. This means that the patterns we observe are not reducible to, or explainable by, any one theory."[760]

Selby observes that another problem is that "Foucauldian tools can be used to theorise the 'how of power', as Foucault put it, but they cannot help us in understanding the 'when', the 'where' or (most significantly) the 'why' of power." I would add that they cannot help with the 'who' either. This is not to say that the 'how' is not important, nor that the tools provided by Foucault cannot be exactly the

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759   Jan Selby, 'Engaging Foucault': 331

760   Colin Wight, *Agents, Structures and International Relations: Politics as Ontology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 294

appropriate ones for a number of social problems. The problem is, in short, that

> while Foucauldian perspectives can be used to illuminate how new techniques of surveillance and organisation are transforming the practices of liberal warfare, they cannot tell us why the US state re-invaded Iraq in 2003, or why the British state participated in that invasion but the French state did not. Yet these are the sorts of phenomena, amongst others, that a theorisation of global power relations would need to provide resources to explain. Foucault, standing alone, cannot be convincingly internationalised to provide a theoretical account of the contemporary world order.[761]

Possibilities for eclecticism and its limits

In this thesis I have complemented Foucault's work with authors like Agamben, Laclau and Mouffe for the specific purpose of exploring productive ways of analyzing the discourse of the war on terror. This was not an impossible task, given that these writers share similar traditions and epistemological assumptions. Their points of difference may be reasonably solved in favour of one position or the other depending on their applicability to the case study at hand without significantly altering the overall congruency of the theoretical principles. This is not to say that the works of these writers may be condensed into a single harmonious theory with unlimited explanatory power, but that their divergences will have varying degrees of usefulness as tools to highlight and understand aspects of different social phenomena.

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761   Jan Selby, 'Engaging Foucault': 337

However, I have gone further by arguing that certain Foucauldian notions would benefit if we opened the door to other authors not so evidently compatible. This is the case of Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda, who are interested in the validity of objective facts while maintaining a constructivist approach.[762] This begs for the question of how far we can take eclecticism. The answer, I believe, lies in what constitutes a logical contradiction or not. As I noted in chapter 3, Foucault was not implying that there was no world external to thought or that all claims were of equal value. Such claim would have cancelled any possibility of dialogue with positions arguing in favour of the existence of objective facts, data or events. Rather, a careful reading of Foucault reveals that he was not interested in objective facts because he did not believe they could be made sense of without a discursive standpoint.[763] This is true in the epistemological sense that objects and empirical data that capture human attention have more value for us than those we ignore. They become meaningful for a variety of reasons, from the trivial or personal, to the social, political or spiritual. Our perception of such facts is also subject to human error, interpretation and limitation. This is true even for hard science – something which is acknowledged by Goode and Ben Yehuda.[764] Indeed, the various filters through which we perceive reality cancel the possibility of absolute certainty, except for purely abstract spheres, such as mathematics. Nevertheless, this does not mean that it is futile to acknowledge empirical facts and events in order to use them as referents for objectivity. As I have argued, they can and do have value, even for constructivist discourse analysis.[765] The point here is that the recovery of an objective dimension as proposed by Goode and Ben Yehuda constitutes *no logical contradiction* with Foucault's claim that we make sense of objects through discourse, or with his *preference* to analyse discourse without contrasting it with facts.

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762   Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics: The Social Construction of Deviance* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994): 36
763   The position is best explained in *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe and Zizek (UK: Blackwell, 1999)*: 94
764   Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics*: 37
765   See chapter 3.

It is clear then that the possibility of complementing two seemingly dissimilar positions depends on whether or not their *specific claims* and the logical implications of the claims contradict each other. Notice that it is possible to assess the compatibility of particular theoretical notions without the need of appealing to theories as a whole, as the specific claims of a certain theory or thinker do not automatically imply the rest of the theory. This is why disagreement is possible within Feminist theory, or within Marxist traditions, for two examples, while most of their basic principles are shared. It is, in fact, desirable to assess specific claims on their own and avoid the trap of accepting or rejecting theoretical frameworks as whole undividable units. The latter can lead to unproductive labelling.

The potential compatibility of specific theoretical claims allows for a wide range of possible inter-theoretical dialogues so far largely unexplored. However, there is a limit to this endeavour, the one imposed by contradictory statements. A theory flatly denying the construction of discursive objects, for example, would not be able to stand side by side with Foucauldian discourse analysis. Similarly, if we were to (incorrectly) interpret Foucault as a radical relativist, there would be no possibility of introducing any objective dimension.

The discourse of the war on terrorism: resonance, contradictions and dynamism

The specific themes and discursive objects on the subject of terrorism since 2001 in the US can be traced – through their instances of production and characteristics – back to a certain network of power relations. We find at the centre of this network the special interest of neoconservatism. Their ideology and goals was established long before 2001, but it finds in the discourse a complement, an updated purpose and an extension. This group of power functions as a pivotal point between the Israel lobby – with which they often overlap – the current US administration, and certain sectors of academia,

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industry, religion and media.

This is not to say that the discourse has been entirely masterminded by neoconservatives. Rather, since 2001 and up to this point they have been at the centre of the resonating network of societies of discourse and doctrines from which the discourse has emerged. As this is a fluctuating network rather than a structure, it is possible that the range of their influence may change or diminish. It follows that the discourse must be understood in similar terms: as a set of variable discontinuities over which no single group has entire control. To the extent that the discourse resonates throughout society as it is reinterpreted and reproduced according to subjectivities, it has a life of its own; even if its different elements have been (re)generated from previous discourses by a number of identifiable individuals.

This explains in part that in the development of the themes of the discourse we find contradictions and discontinuities. For example, George W. Bush made a distinction between the 'enemy' and Islam during the first days after September 11, 2001, but he did not reinforce it afterwards. Simultaneously, several commentators were allowed to opine differently by identifying terrorism with Palestinians, Muslims or Arabs, thus linking the fear with these groups of people. At the same time, some practices have also sent a confrontational message by targeting mostly these groups.

Another example of contradictions is the central discursive object – terrorism – which does not allow for the possibility of Western states to be defined as such. It implies a *status quo* definition, but at the same time appeals to civil society through both language and practices: the fear of an unprecedented danger for society, combined with themes that reinforce the American/Western identity in its opposition to barbarism, incarnated here as Islam and the Arab world.

As the themes develop in their specificities, they are reinforced by rituals, authority and institutions (i.e. principles of exclusion).

Just as the discourse resonates within the network, it is itself to some extent the resonance of historic themes of identity and security. Some of these themes are generic and serve only as a template; this explains the similarities between the war on terrorism and the Cold War. Other instances of resonance are only related to the network of power and not to society in general; for example, the 'noble lie' is a Straussian specific concept, while the focus on the Middle East and Israel is pertinent to the Israel lobby but not to American (or Jewish) identity.

Much of the discourse of the war on terrorism is best understood by paying attention to its specificities in the use of language and practices, their relationship, and the gap between objective facts or events and the discourse itself. In some instances we find that the contradictions and distortions contrast starkly with what is available for verification (disproportionality), to the point that the discourse ceases to be exclusively a paradigm for understanding political phenomena, or a set of social assumptions for an American world view, and becomes also a tool of power for specific agents and their agendas.

If we further examine the content of the message appearing through the practices related to the state of exception – such as torture, humiliation, abuse, surveillance and authoritarian modifications of the law – we find an affirmation of the power of the sovereign to strip life of its political qualities and to turn it into bare life. That is, to turn citizens into a human being lacking rights to protect them from the sovereign, the holder of the monopoly of violence. This message often contradicts the message at the level of the spoken word, yet it is not cancelled by it. The message as a whole then becomes paradoxical and the paradoxes and contradictions manifest in different ways: exceptional circumstances

yet normal; outside society yet within; a threat from small groups yet measures for everyone.

The analysis can be taken further by carrying out an examination of the discourse of the war on terrorism in its social antagonism – that is, at the points where it is forced to offer responses to both common and fringe challenging narratives. This has highlighted the existence of strategies of power that shift, change and adapt in accordance to the specificity of the challenges. Just as the dynamism manifests in the process of resonance within the network of power mentioned above, it also occurs in the responses of the hegemonic discourse towards the alternatives. In the latter process, the constitutive outside performs a role in the production of the hegemonic discourse, in as much as it forces it to constantly adapt and reinvent itself into newer and more convincing forms.

It is worth asking if the choice of case study has made any difference on the observations about Foucault's strength's and limits. Would the thesis have born the same results had the object of analysis been, for example, the transformations in higher education in the UK under New Labour? The answer is no. The war on terror highlights issues of power that an examination of higher education would not. The existence of the neoconservative network, clearly at the centre of the production of the discourse demands a reflection on the nature of power at the top levels of society. The specific distortions of facts on their part beg for a reassessment of what we call 'truth' in discourse analysis. The material manifestations of the discourse, embodied in practices such as war, torture and surveillance, suggest the expansion of biopolitics into thanatopolitics. The confrontation of the discourse with alternatives on the fringe urges us to look into views that have ventured further than Foucault. On the other hand, we would expect a more traditional Foucauldian outcome when examining the workings of institutions of education or science. Once again this stresses the fact that Foucauldian notions should be best understood not as the components of a general theory of society, but as tools which are most

appropriate for certain types of cases – the ones that most interested Foucault – and not others.

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