Marginalizing the "other" in the discourse of the Bush Administration's War on Terror

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MARGINALIZING THE "OTHER" IN THE DISCOURSE OF
THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION'S WAR ON TERROR

by

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Bachelor of Arts
University of Florida
1992

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Master of Arts Degree in Communication Studies
Department of Communication Studies
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Graduate College
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is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in Communication Studies

[Signatures]

Examination Committee Chair

Dean of the Graduate College

Graduate College Faculty Representative
ABSTRACT

Marginalizing the “Other” in the Discourse of the Bush Administration’s War on Terror

by

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Dr. Thomas R. Burkholder, Examination Committee Chair
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In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, al Qaeda-led terrorist attacks, President George W. Bush and his administration launched a campaign against Iraq in an effort to oust its leader, Saddam Hussein, and “liberate” the Iraqi people. Despite no credible evidence of Iraqi involvement in the 9/11 attacks and the disdain of most of the global community, a majority of Americans supported the administration’s desire to attack Iraq.

In an effort to understand the impact of the Bush Administration’s framing of the war on terror on the American public, the “Other,” and the global community as a whole, this study analyzes four of President Bush’s public addresses. The resulting critique reveals that appealing to American exceptionalism, demonizing the enemy, and marginalizing the “Other” foster an ideology of dominance and inequality, while fueling tensions between East and West, reinforcing stereotypes, and resulting in more terrorist activity.
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to Kasen. There were times during this process when I was unable to give her the attention she desired and deserved, but I want her to know that I did this for her.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the days and months immediately following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, much of the world came together to grieve with and support the American people. On September 12, the liberal Paris newspaper *Le Monde* even proclaimed, “We are all Americans.”¹ Despite the horrendous acts of violence, the international show of solidarity was uplifting. The Bush Administration vowed to fight the terrorists, specifically Osama bin Laden, and immediately instituted changes to ensure that all “terrorists” were kept away from American borders. When the United States learned that bin Laden was in Afghanistan, the U.S. military was deployed to the Middle East to launch an assault against him and his terrorist network, al Qaeda. For the most part, these actions were considered justified, as it became apparent soon after 9/11 that bin Laden was responsible for the attacks. Global goodwill began to wane, however, when the Bush Administration started issuing directives to Saddam Hussein and Iraq in 2002—directives that seemingly had nothing to do with bin Laden or the 9/11 attacks. Political scientist Tareq Y. Ismael, a noted authority on Iraq, and Jacqueline S. Ismael posit,

¹ http://www.worldpress.org/specials/wtc/front.htm
With Afghanistan effectively brought under US hegemony, Osama bin Laden was abruptly replaced with another personification of evil: Saddam Hussein. The marketing of Saddam Hussein as a serious threat to international security was more challenging than the Bush Administration anticipated. [...] Nevertheless, widespread fears left Americans receptive to Bush’s claims about Saddam’s possession of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), which the media, the Bush Administration, and the British government, all repeatedly portrayed as an immediate threat to Western civilization, and indeed, to its very survival. While the American public bought the Bush Administration’s bill of goods on the necessity of war on Iraq, the rest of the world was unconvinced. (7)

In the ensuing months, the Bush Administration defied the United Nations and international law, and launched an all-out campaign of “shock and awe” in an effort to oust Hussein and “liberate” the Iraqi people. The consequences of what is still going on in Iraq—the climbing death toll, the U.S. economic drain, the severing of diplomatic ties, the increase in terrorist activity, and the absolute destruction of that country, to name just a few—are sure to be felt for many decades to come.

This thesis will argue that the Bush Administration’s framing of the war on terror—appealing to American exceptionalism, demonizing the enemy, and marginalizing the Other—effectively garnered the support of the American public and rationalized their actions in the Middle East. According to GlobeScan and the Program on International

2 “Shock and awe” was a concept introduced by the Bush Administration’s Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld. According to Bob Woodward in Plan of Attack, “[...] it meant building up so much force and conducting various ‘spiking’ operations and bombing that it might in itself trigger regime change” (102).
Policy Attitudes (PIPA), a poll of 35 countries conducted in the summer of 2004 revealed that when “asked how the foreign policy of President Bush has affected their feelings toward the US, in 30 countries a majority or plurality said it made them feel ‘worse’ about America […].” Conversely, the results of a Harris Poll conducted in June 2003 showed that “a majority of Americans [felt] good about the war, believe[d] that we were justified in attacking Iraq, and [did] not want to hear, or accept the possibility, that the reasons for going to war might have been misleading” (Taylor). While support for the war in Iraq has declined among Americans in recent years, a September 2006 CNN poll reveals that forty-three percent of Americans still believe Saddam Hussein was a part of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, despite the fact that the Bush Administration has admitted he had nothing to do with them (Poll). Furthermore, a July 2007 New York Times/CBS News poll shows a slight increase in support for military action in Iraq after “new warnings from the Bush Administration about heightened terrorist activity” (Thee).

Critics and scholars alike believe the Bush Administration’s controversial decision to attack Iraq is mired in a neoliberal ideology of imperialism and hegemony that creates a dialectical tension between East and West. In Globalization Unmasked: Imperialism in the 21st Century, sociologists James Petras and Henry Veltmeyer ask:

Why does Washington have to hide the real economic, political and military motivations for its interventions behind high moral principles? Basically, it is because the U.S. is an imperial democracy and moral rhetoric is used to sway or neutralize domestic public opinion. […] Like all imperialist powers, Washington presents its violent interventions as measures intended to defend ‘national security.’ (139)
There are a number of salient reasons to study, analyze, and expose dominant discourse. Many believe the policies in the Bush Administration's war on terror are ethnocentric and unilateralist, and are resulting in greater tensions around the world, an increase in terrorist activity, and pervasive anti-American sentiment. Additionally, the administration's dialectical framing of the conflict (i.e., good vs. evil, moral vs. immoral, strong vs. weak) and consequent marginalization of the Other raise serious ethical concerns. Of course, American dominance is not a new concept, but globalization creates a dilemma unlike any we have seen before. In addition to revealing the effects of dominant discourse, it is my hope that this study may contribute to a growing body of research and scholarship that seeks to examine and contextualize America's emerging role in the global community.

Globalization

We are bombarded daily with images of a multicultural and unified global community. At the same time, we see examples of growing anti-American sentiment around the world, particularly since the start of the war in Iraq. Globalization, for all its glitzy appeal, is inextricably linked to inequality, injustice, and power abuse, and the United States stands as the dominant force in the battle between the developed and developing worlds. At no other time in history have we been so exposed to the beliefs and ideas of other cultures, just as they have been exposed to ours. However, despite the benefits of globalization—access to a plethora of goods and services, and ease of international communication and travel, for example—there are undeniable drawbacks to this phenomenon. "Rapidly, in the span of a few years," writes Jan Nederveen Pieterse, a
professor who specializes in global sociology, “globalization has become a focal point of social criticism, a gathering point of collective discontent—due to financial instability, economic crisis, global inequality, deepening poverty and social exclusion, job loss, Americanization, and environmental deterioration” (28). It is alternately described as imperialistic or “the great equalizer.”

One thing that is certain, however, is that globalization in its current manifestation is corporate-led. In *Jihad vs. McWorld: Terrorism’s Challenge to Democracy*, internationally renowned political theorist Benjamin R. Barber argues, “There is no activity more intrinsically globalizing than trade, no ideology less interested in nations than capitalism, no challenge to frontiers more audacious than the market. By many measures, corporations are today more central players in global affairs than nations” (23). Multinational corporations and global institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) play prominent roles within the context of corporate globalization. Corporate globalization, also referred to as neoliberalism, relies on an autonomous market, diminishing social services, government deregulation, and privatization. In the quest for free trade, transnational corporations (TNCs) are gaining power while national sovereignty is being reduced. A predominant criticism of this phenomenon is the spreading of “consumerism” among traditional cultures. Political journalist William Finnegan writes, “Presented with special force to developing countries as a formula for economic management, [globalization] is also, in its fullness, a theory of how the world should be run, under American supervision” (42).

Many critics feel that the current trends in our globalizing world are also resulting in cultural homogenization, or worse, cultural imperialism, and it is Western, or more
precisely, American, culture that is pervading the globe. Barber refers to this as "McWorld," a culture that eschews traditional cultural practices while trumpeting a lifestyle based on consumerism and profit. Many fear the disintegration of culturally distinct ways and values as the world is inundated with American culture. American fast-food restaurants, television, films, and music saturate once traditional cultures. People all over the globe are beginning to dress alike, listen to the same music, watch the same films, and buy the same products. McWorld, as Barber presents it, is a consumer-driven culture that exists on the mass consumption of goods and services, while the ideas of community, culture, and spirituality/religion slowly disintegrate. It is an increasing awareness of the Other, just as culture is becoming more homogenous, effectively negating “otherness.” It is the expansion of free market principles and institutions, and the simultaneous restriction of government regulation. It is not, as many believe, a true democracy. McWorld produces individualism, privatism, and materialism. In essence, as denizens of McWorld, we are so integrated in the consumerist culture that our identities are constructed by the market—products, not our role or place in society, communicate who we are, what we wear, and even what we think.

Moreover, the events of 9/11 have added a new element for consideration, at least to Americans: global terrorism. President George W. Bush, in his bid to go after the terrorists, told the world, “Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists.” According to American philosopher Richard Rorty, “Disagreement with Washington by foreign governments is being treated by the Bush White House not as honest difference of opinion but as the

failure of knaves and fools to accept guidance from the wise, farsighted, and benevolent” (23).

At home, Americans opposed to the war have been attacked as un-American and anti-democratic. For example, after making anti-war comments at a concert in London just prior to the start of the war, the Dixie Chicks, an American country music band, were branded “traitors” and “Saddam’s angels,” among other things, by many Americans, including former fans (Segal). According to the Chicago Tribune, “radio stations across the country dropped the Chicks from their playlists after receiving a flood of protests from irate listeners who did not appreciate the Chicks speaking ill of Bush” (Chicks Nicked). It became an ‘either/or’ situation as the patriotism of those who did not feel the war was justified was questioned. Surely, such an ultimatum can only serve to divide further the world. Barber posits, “An America that comprehends the realities of interdependence and wishes to devise a democratic architecture to contain its global disorder cannot ask others to either join it or else ‘suffer the consequences.’ [. . .] Rather, America must join the world on whatever terms it can negotiate on an equal footing with the world” (Jihad vs. McWorld xxI).

If the purpose of globalization is to create a global democratic community, then the President’s message is surely not in line with that directive. Many sectors of the world are resisting this current form of globalization, but Barber argues that it is not democracy they are resisting; it is Westernization, or, McWorld. He believes the U.S. must work “multilaterally” with other nations to fill the chasm created by the hegemonic tendencies of corporate globalization. “Yet in the last ten years,” Barber contends, “the United States
has intensified its commitment to a political culture of unilateralism and faux autonomy that reinforces rather than attenuates the effects of McWorld" (*Jihad vs. McWorld* xxi).

Democracy is not about individualism, consumption, and materialism. It is about real communities and the citizens of those communities, equality, concern for the issues, and nurturing. Barber writes, "Market relations are simply not a surrogate for social relations, let alone for democratic social relations [...]" (*Jihad vs. McWorld* 237). Furthermore, if democracy represents the will of the people as reflected in the actions of the government, then the disintegration of government so inherent in economic globalization is certainly *anti-*democratic.

### Tensions between East and West

The Bush Administration’s actions in Iraq over the past few years have fueled fears of *neocolonialism* and have further polarized Eastern and Western societies.

Communication scholars Stephen John Hartnett and Laura Ann Stengrim state, "[...]

President George W. Bush has embarked on a course of empire-building colonialism, complete with U.S. armed forces and companies stationed indefinitely in foreign lands—Afghanistan and Iraq for now, with more likely to come—ruled by governments that [...] are mere puppets for U.S. power" (10). Additionally, their threats to other non-Western nations, such as North Korea, Syria, Iran, and Pakistan only confirm—in the minds of

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4 Peter Childs and R.J. Patrick Williams, in *An Introduction to Postcolonial Theory* (1997), characterize neocolonialism as the modern phenomenon or condition in which the developed world continues its hegemonic grip on the subaltern. "In the period after decolonization," they write, "it rapidly became apparent (to the newly independent nations, at least) that although colonial armies and bureaucracies might have withdrawn, Western powers were still intent on maintaining maximum indirect control [...] via political, cultural and above all economic channels [...]" (5).
many—the U.S. desire for global control. According to American historian Richard Crockatt, “A common thread among virtually all responses from the Middle East and the Muslim world in general is the profound conviction that the United States has consistently pursued policies that were against Arab and Muslim interests and in favor of those of Israel” (69). These acts of hegemonism—of seeking to control and influence other nations—undermine all peacekeeping efforts and attempts at democratization.

On the surface, U.S. actions and the accompanying rhetoric are framed in terms of morality and civility, and the pursuit of a peaceful, united world. However, the Bush Administration's decision to attack Iraq in March of 2003 has only amplified tensions between East and West. As President Bush justified his actions in Iraq through his war on terror speeches, the ways in which he framed each side was evident. Just as Edward Said, the literary theorist and activist who is regarded as the founding figure in postcolonial theory, points out in his seminal work, Orientalism, the West (the United States) is depicted as moral, kind, patient, and civilized, while the East (Iraq) is rendered dangerous, aggressive, hateful, evil, uncivilized, and completely incapable of fending for themselves (300).

These depictions suggest superiority on the part of the West, while relegating the East to a decidedly inferior status. In An Introduction to Postcolonial Theory, Peter Childs and R.J. Patrick Williams write, “One of the most influential aspects of Orientalism has been Said’s examination of the way in which the West not only constructs the Orient, but constructs it precisely as its Other, the repository of all those characteristics deemed non-Western [and therefore negative]” (101). The practice of Orientalism by Western cultures is the social, cultural, and political construction of the
East from a Western viewpoint, not as how it truly exists. According to Childs and Williams, Orientalism is more dominant now than it was in the past, simply because it is linked to global politics and policymaking, and because of Eastern portrayals in the media (101). Orientalism, then, is motivated by the West’s desire for rationality and need for explanation. We are drawn by the East’s enigmatic qualities, but fear that which we do not know or understand.

One of the predominant criticisms of the Bush Administration has been its defiance of the United Nations and its unilateralist attack on Iraq. In *From 9/11 to Terror War*, noted critical theorist Douglas Kellner writes, “[W]hereas a sane global policy against the international threat of terrorism would involve bringing in as many Arab allies and other countries as possible in the war against Islamic extremism, Bush’s ‘doctrine’ was likely to alienate both Arabs and allies in the struggle” (213). Alienate it did. Kellner continues, “Although Bush’s arrogant posturing was playing well domestically, it was faring ever more poorly in the global arena where it is necessary to gain allies to effectively fight terrorism” (213). The Bush Administration’s insular and self-absorbed attitude may be its downfall. In *America Alone*, Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, both experts in U.S. foreign policy issues, contend, “The United States now finds itself uncomfortably isolated within the international community; anti-American feelings have risen quickly; and the nation confronts an increasingly dangerous and complex security environment. […] Under [the Bush Administration’s] influence, America has, sadly, lost legitimacy” (297).
Focusing on Global Issues in Communication

We are living in a time of intense change, and the issues of globalization, culture, terrorism, hegemony, and democracy have become inextricably linked. The current trends in globalization play an important role in the war on terror, in the U.S. role in the global community, and in how the U.S. is perceived by other nation-states. Social and political theorist Carl Boggs asserts, “The immorality and hypocrisy of such U.S.-engineered catastrophes deserve far more attention than they have received in the media, the academic world, and the political arena” (3-4). Consequently, it is important to study the impact of the Bush Administration’s framing of the war on terror and of the Other, and the implications it had and will continue to have not only on the American public, but on the global community as a whole.

With the onslaught of globalization and the supposed interdependence of the global community, it is vital that communication scholars look at how leaders and other key players (including the media) communicate from a broader, more universal perspective. Indeed, communication plays a large role not only in globalization, but in global terrorism and the war on terror. In his 1998 address to the International Communication Association, communication scholar Peter Monge states that “those whose work adopts a global perspective comprise a small fraction of communication scholars. Most of the rest of us in the communication discipline are just beginning to respond to the global imperative” (143). Since the publication of Said’s Orientalism, scholars have been building on its theoretical underpinnings. In the communication field, according to Raka Shome and Radha Hegde, “recognizing the postcolonial politics of communication opens up new vistas for communication scholarship” (249). While many critics and scholars

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have since written about the effects of 9/11 and the war in Iraq, few have analyzed the political, cultural, and ethical implications of dominant discourse from a global perspective. In “Communication in the Global Community,” Patricia Riley and Peter Monge write, “The difficult problems and complex transformations in this smaller world require scholars to question the inevitability of globalization’s supposed outcomes […]. Similarly, understanding the role of communication in the building [and destroying] of communities in this changing environment is critical” (355). In light of the events that have taken place since September 11, 2001, the need to focus on global issues in communication has never been greater.

Chapter Outline

In the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Bush relied on his public addresses to unite the American public and justify going to war in Iraq. Although much of the global community was outraged by what he had to say, the American public, for the most part, stood behind him and his administration and supported the decision to go to war. This study is a close textual analysis of four of Bush’s war on terror speeches that illuminates how framing an issue can affect the way we perceive it.

My analysis draws from two critical approaches—postcolonial theory, which addresses the relationship between East and West, and critical discourse analysis, which I use to examine and scrutinize the relationship between discourse and dominant ideology. In Chapter 2, I describe these approaches as they relate to my study. After introducing the speeches and explaining their salience, Chapter 3 focuses on a descriptive textual analysis to reveal thematic elements and key patterns. In Chapter 4, I discuss the implications of
the speeches and the responses from critics, the American public, and the global community. In addition to explaining the significance from a communication perspective, I address the global and ethical implications. Chapter 5 serves as my conclusion.
CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE/METHOD OF ANALYSIS

This study utilizes two critical approaches—postcolonial theory and critical discourse analysis (CDA). In recent years, postcolonial theory has emerged in the field of communication studies as a way to expose dominant discourses and practices. In the introduction to *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory*, Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman write, “If one of the most spectacular events of the twentieth century was the dismantling of colonialism, in the shape of the European overseas empires, then one of the less immediately perceptible—but ultimately more far-reaching in its effects and implications—has been the continued globalising spread of imperialism” (1). Edward W. Said’s *Orientalism* timelessly exemplifies the political and cultural inequalities that continue despite decolonization, and much of postcolonial theory is based on his study. Specifically, I find Said’s treatment of the conflict between Western and Middle Eastern ideals exceptionally germane to my study. For example, he writes, “[T]he principal dogmas of Orientalism exist in their purest form today in studies of the Arabs and Islam. [...] one is the absolute and systematic difference between the West, which is rational, developed, humane, superior, and the Orient, which is aberrant, undeveloped, inferior” (300).
Similarly, postcolonial theory is a response to the continued subjugation of the "colonized" by the "colonizer;" it seeks to expose discourse that is socially, culturally, and politically constructed through Western ideals. In "Postcolonial Approaches to Communication: Charting the Terrain, Engaging the Intersections," postcolonial scholars Raka Shome and Radha Hegde offer this definition: "Postcolonial studies, broadly described, is an interdisciplinary field of inquiry committed to theorizing the problematics of colonization and decolonization. As a field it is positioned within the broader critical project of cultural studies that has had so much influence in communication scholarship" (250). Given the nature of my study, I believe postcolonial theory is one of the most effective and appropriate lenses through which to view President Bush's speeches.

Furthermore, I feel CDA is the most suitable method in which to examine and scrutinize the relationship between discourse and dominant ideology. Teun A. van Dijk, editor of the journal Discourse & Communication, explains that CDA "go[es] beyond mere description and explanation, and pay[s] more explicit attention to the sociopolitical and cultural presuppositions and implications of discourse analyses" (Editor 131).

Postcolonial theory and critical discourse analysis are arguably more ideological than theoretical. They offer a specific way of viewing dominant discourse, and with that, consequently, come presuppositions and assumptions. After listening to President Bush’s war on terror speeches, I deliberately chose postcolonial theory and CDA to expose what I believe to be hegemonically-constructed rhetoric. Below, I will more thoroughly explicate these perspectives and establish their relevance to this study.
Postcolonial Theory

Many postcolonial scholars believe the emergence of corporate globalization has become the new “colonialism.” Despite claims that this new global community represents equality, inclusion, and opportunity, hegemonic practices by global powers still exist. Shome and Hegde write:

The rhetoric of multiculturalism celebrates the diverse assemblage of cultures in their pristine flavors—colorful yet standing separate in their authenticity. [However,] The liberal approach to multiculturalism is couched in a sanitized version of difference where the unspoken centers of power, and the normativity of whiteness, remain unquestioned. This cosmetic approach to multiculturalism does not question the systemic structures of power nor does it touch the contradictions and tensions written into the realities of everyday life. (262-263)

In reality, the colonial power structure remains, albeit in a much more subtle way, and the formerly colonized—the Other—are still under the imposing grip of the elite. Many issues materialize from a communication standpoint, not the least of which is the ability of the West to impose its “messages” on other cultures. Postcolonial theory has thus emerged within the communication discipline as a response to the indirect subjugation of the Other by dominant cultures. Shome and Hegde assert, “The driving force of postcolonial work is to interrogate the universalizing discourse of Western modernity” (262). It is used to analyze what postcolonial scholars often refer to as neocolonial discourse. In addition, with American/Western influences becoming the dominant global
cultural paradigm, it is one of the most effective ways to research these new
“communities,” for it recognizes that hierarchical structures still exist.

Postcolonial theory is seen by its proponents as a system by which cultures,
previously (and, as is the case, currently) mired in Western ideology, can be given a
voice. Scholars do acknowledge that the communication discipline is embedded within
Western thought and practices. Shome and Hegde write, “Taking into account the
historical genealogy of the field, a postcolonial intervention pushes for more socially
responsible problematizations of communication. It is these critiques that will lead
eventually to the production of a more just and equitable knowledge base about the third
world, the other, and the ‘rest’ of the world” (261). In this sense, if postcolonial theory
benefits the “receivers” of dominant discourse, then many “groups” are affected: culture,
class, race, and gender. Moreover, postcolonial theory benefits those within the Western
culture by exposing the ignorance inherent in “Western representations of non-Western
sites” (Kraidy 318), for the Western image of Otherness has the potential to shape how
we perceive people in other countries. Negative stereotyping of the Other, for example,
tends to exaggerate ideas of difference, and reinforces perceptions of cultural and moral
superiority.

Postcolonial scholarship is intrinsically linked to other liberal theories. Shome and
Hegde write, “To a large extent, the critical impulses informing postcolonial studies are
reflected in much of the left leaning scholarship, including cultural studies, Marxist
theory, feminist theory, postmodern theory, queer theory, and more” (251). In her
postcolonial feminist critique of National Geographic’s “millennium” issue, postcolonial
scholar Radhika Parameswaran found the same old stereotypes to be prevalent. Her case
study of the magazine’s depiction of globalization reveals a dichotomous relationship that harkens back to traditional feminine/masculine representations. She writes, “In the binary oppositional narrative of East vs. West as spiritual vs. material, the spiritual, conjoined with fatalism and mute acceptance of nature was gendered feminine, and the material, constituted by logic, aggressive questioning of destiny, and the desire to conquer, was identified as masculine” (305).

Similarly, international communication scholar Marwan Kraidy finds in his study of a series of articles in the Washington Post entitled “American Popular Culture Abroad,” that global audiences are depicted as the “submissive female,” while U.S. popular culture is depicted as the “dominant male.” This goes back to my earlier assertion that Western discourse remains constructed through dominant ideologies, and while it certainly can be argued that many Eastern cultures are male-dominant (some going so far as to mistreat and abuse women and children), it stands to reason that these Western constructions only reinforce such practices. We cannot ask a people to alter their traditions, yet continue, albeit in a much more subtle fashion, doing the same.

In her study, Parameswaran questions National Geographic’s depiction of the non-Western world, and refers to the “influence” that such media have “on their elite and largely male audience members, who wield power in the global commercial and political arenas” (289). Her study is premised upon the following questions:

1. How does the Geographic portray the impact of Western consumer modernity on non-Western cultures?

2. What representations of femininity, masculinity, race, and nation become alloyed with global culture in the magazine’s arresting photographs?
3. What troubling aspects of globalization does this magazine, which purports to be an authoritative window on the world, ignore and disavow? (289)

Parameswaran uses textual analysis to answer her questions, and consequently finds that “postcolonial theories of representation empower media critics to disrupt and denaturalize the subtle hegemony of the discursive myths that constitute the logic of globalization” (289).

Focusing on the hybridity aspect of postcolonial theory, Kraidy approaches his text using Derridean deconstruction. His findings reveal two distinct meanings within the Post’s discourse: the explicit message in which hybridity is portrayed as “enlightened diversity,” and another less obvious, implicit representation of “cultural hegemony” (325). Ultimately, Kraidy asserts, “hybridity is appropriated in an attempt to fix the meanings constructed by global audiences in their reception of U.S. popular culture” (331). For example, Hollywood executives justify the lack of minority actors in American films by stating that foreign audiences are not interested in “ethnic” or “female” movies. In doing so, they transfer blame to the global (submissive) audience. Whether explicit or implicit, U.S. culture emerges as the dominant construct.

Like feminist and Marxist theory, postcolonial theory is not based on a hierarchical construct, but rather a fluid dynamic; consequently, it does not rely on any one method. “Because its questions emerge from larger social contexts, its method is therefore shaped by the questions posed by the contexts,” Shome and Hegde explain (258). However, they emphasize the importance of methodological reflexivity: “While working within a certain philosophical or methodological tradition [be it deconstruction or ethnography], postcolonial scholars remain acutely aware of the history, heritage, and legacies of such
methods, and the dilemma that consequently confronts the researcher” (259). In addition, representation of the Other should take into account cultural and historical differences—participants should not all be “lumped” together as the oppressed or the Other, for this only reiterates a power structure the postcolonial theorist is trying to avoid. Identity, particularly cultural and political identity, is paramount to the creation of a more equal multicultural society.

Critiques of Postcolonial Theory

Despite the recent popularity of postcolonial scholarship, it does have its critics. Communication scholar Anandam Kavoori argues that “postcolonial theory [. . .] ignores the politics of its own placement in western academe and its singular ties to the workings of global capitalism” (196). He sees a disjuncture in the term “post-colonial” and the issues of imperialism and hegemony it seeks to expose. How can post-colonial theory reveal the problematic effects of colonial discourse? More importantly, how can Western scholars utilize a theory that seeks to discredit the discourse of a culture to which they belong? Shome’s response is rather terse:

[. . .] isn’t that the very predicament of the postcolonial subject position?
That the ‘knowledge structure’ in which many post-colonial intellectuals are/were trained was itself an effect of colonialism to which they were and are ‘subject’? Indeed, isn’t the very predicament of the ‘postcolonial’ position that we have [or had] little choice in this matter as we are ‘subject’ to colonial intellectual domination in ‘other worlds’ as

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`knowledges’ from the ‘West’ travel through global circuits of power and limit [and in some cases wipe out] the means for producing ‘indigenous’ knowledge? (209)

To illustrate her point, Shome refers to feminist theory, arguing that Kavoori’s “logic” would require that feminist theorists not use feminist theory if they were trained in male-dominant Western academia.

Ella Shohat, an expert in Middle Eastern studies and another outspoken critic of postcolonial studies, posits, “The term post-colonial carries with it the implication that colonialism is now a matter of the past, undermining colonialism’s economic, political, and cultural deformative-traces in the present. The ‘post-colonial’ inadvertently glosses over the fact that global hegemony, even in the post-cold war era, persists in forms other than overt colonial rule” (326). Shome counters that “post” represents the phase (or, perhaps, space or time), whereas neocolonial or colonial represents the condition: “[Post-colonial] is a project that attempts to examine various colonial relations that mark and emerged (albeit unevenly) in various post-colonial spaces” (207).

Shome and Hegde write, “The postcolonial approach to question, reframe, and rethink epistemic assumptions is inspired by the spirit of resistant enquiry, the drive to return the colonialist gaze” (264). In my view, postcolonial theory is a valid and important part of communication studies as it offers an alternative perspective while dismantling and exposing dominant discourse. Despite critics’ claims that “postcolonial” undermines the very essence of the colonial experience (by insinuating that colonialism is no longer practiced), I believe it is imperative that scholars look at dominant discourse through a lens unclouded by cultural assumptions and judgments.
Critical Discourse Analysis

Like postcolonial theory, CDA challenges the inequalities and abuses of power inherent in dominant ideology. Its primary focus is social and political issues, and it ultimately hopes to effect change through a critical understanding of the relationship between dominance and discourse. According to van Dijk, CDA centers on “the role of discourse in the [re]production and challenge of dominance. Dominance is defined here as the exercise of social power by elites, institutions or groups, that results in social inequality, [...]” (Principles 249-250). In that respect, CDA focuses on “top-down relations of dominance”—meaning it looks not so much at the persuaded as it does the persuader. “[O]ur critical approach prefers to focus on the elites and their discursive strategies for the maintenance of inequality,” writes van Dijk (Principles 250).

CDA also focuses on the power strategies used to justify and legitimate dominant actions. According to van Dijk, “‘modern’ and often more effective power is mostly cognitive, and enacted by persuasion, dissimulation or manipulation, among other strategic ways to change the mind of others in one’s own interests” (Principles 254). In the Bush Administration’s war on terror, for instance, fear and morality are used to manipulate and persuade American audiences to support U.S. actions in Iraq. van Dijk writes, “One major function of dominant discourse is precisely to manufacture such consensus, acceptance and legitimacy of dominance” (Principles 255). Consequently, CDA is concerned with power abuse, and the moral and ethical implications of such.
In “Discourse and Manipulation,” van Dijk applies CDA to a speech by British Prime Minister Tony Blair regarding the war in Iraq to illustrate the use of manipulation. He finds that “the most influential form of manipulation does not focus on the creation of specific preferred mental models, but on more general and abstract beliefs such as knowledge, attitudes and ideologies” (368). Once the intended target has been influenced, “little or no further manipulation attempts may be necessary in order for people to act according to these attitudes” (369). This can be especially true in the face of certain events, such as the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, by playing on fears and insecurities. Van Dijk feels that ‘victims’ of manipulation generally encompass certain fundamental values, an “incomplete or lack of relevant knowledge,” vulnerability in the face of tragedy, and “social positions, professions, status, etc. that induce people into tending to accept the discourses, arguments, etc. of elite persons, groups or organizations” (375).

In the case of Blair’s speech to members of the British parliament, van Dijk argues that while “[they] are not exactly stupid people,” they are “less powerful than the government [Blair and his administration]” (379). Consequently, “Blair defines the situation in such a way that few MPs can refuse, even when they know they are being manipulated and probably lied to” (380).

Intercultural communication scholar Tatyana S. Thweatt uses CDA to investigate the representation of immigrants and refugees in a series of articles and editorials from the local newspaper in a predominantly white community. Through her analysis, she finds

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For the purposes of his study, van Dijk defines manipulation as “a communicative and interactional practice, in which a manipulator exercises control over other people, usually against their will or against their best interests.” For example, “politicians or the media manipulating voters or readers, that is, through some kind of discursive influence” (360).
that news stories regarding immigrants and refugees are almost always negative, thereby contributing to the reproduction of racism and stereotyping. Specifically, the use of metaphors [i.e., the “flood” metaphors: “Refugees were repeatedly said to come in waves, they flooded and even invaded the community”—Thweatt argues that these negative connotations “dehumanize” the refugees (34)], euphemisms, and semantic contrast emphasize the positive aspects of the members of the community, while negatively portraying Otherness. In one such case, “the burning of an ethnic restaurant [presumably by a member of the dominant group] was called an ‘unfortunate incident’” (35), while social problems and other complications within the immigrant/refugee population were emphasized. Thweatt’s analysis demonstrates how the media reproduces the “ideology of white dominance [i.e. ideology of consensus] by creating the ideological context that promotes stereotypes of inferiority and exclusion […]” (40).

**Categories of Analysis**

CDA is multidisciplinary; therefore, methodological approaches are diverse. From a communication standpoint, and for the purposes of this study, a qualitative textual analysis of both discursive and cognitive structures and the use of language might reveal intended meanings. In “The Reality of Racism,” van Dijk lists potential categories of analysis:

- **Actor Description.** Van Dijk points out that “the overall ideological strategy is that of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation” (214). This is one of the most critical and relevant aspects of CDA as it relates to my proposed study. “Models are being expressed and persuasively conveyed that contrast US with THEM, e.g. by emphasizing ‘our’ tolerance, help or sympathy, and by focusing on negative social or
cultural differences, deviance or threats attributed to 'them',' writes van Dijk (Principles 263). This practice, prevalent during colonization, is also characteristic of modern corporate globalization and the resulting power structures, as well as the rhetoric of the war on terror.

- **Authority.** In this strategy, speakers refer to experts, moral leaders, and other authority figures to lend credence to their discourse (215).

- **Consensus.** In this political strategy, discourse implicitly states that WE must stand together. “[I]ngroup unification, cohesion and solidarity [WE against THEM], should prevail over party politics and division” (216). This is particularly relevant to the Bush Administration’s rhetoric, considering Americans are deeply divided on the war in Iraq.

- **Example/Illustration.** Van Dijk writes, “A powerful move in argumentation is to give concrete examples, often in the form of a vignette or short story, illustrating or making more plausible a general point defended by the speaker” (218).

- **Fallacies.** According to van Dijk, “These may pertain to any element of the argumentative event, namely to the nature of the premises, the relations among the premises and the conclusion, the relations between speaker and recipients, and so on” (218).

- **Implication.** Meanings and messages are implied when explicit statements “could be interpreted as biased or racist” (220). In addition, vague meanings are used to de-emphasize those elements the dominant group wishes to keep from recipients.

- **Lexicalization.** In this strategy, the speaker uses different words with similar meanings to express a particular point of view or opinion (220). For example,
replacing “racism” with “xenophobia,” or “poverty” with “destitution” gives the
discourse more gravity or formality.

- National Self-Glorification. This is another method of positive self-presentation.
- Polarization. This is the WE vs. THEM categorization.
- Populism. In this strategy, the speaker claims the people—“everybody”—support or
do not support a particular idea (223); this method is much like the bandwagon
fallacy.
- Victimization. “[W]hen the Others tend to be represented in negative terms, and
especially when they are associated with threats, then the ingroup needs to be
represented as a victim of such a threat” (224). 9/11 is often used to present America
as the “victim.”

In Elite Discourse and Racism, van Dijk describes two more strategies:

- For Their Own Good. In this argument, which van Dijk refers to as “paternalistic,”
the dominant group is engaging in something that is in the best interests of the Other.
“This Apparent Empathy or Apparent Altruism move is again a functional part of the
overall strategy of positive self-representation: We are doing something good for
Them” (95).
- The Numbers Game. In this strategy, figures are used to present information in the
most persuasive manner. “This rhetorical use of quasi-objective figures, […] is one of
the most compelling scare tactics in the formation of public opinion” (107).

Finally, van Dijk refers to a very relevant (in terms of this study) discourse strategy in his
article “Discourse and Manipulation”: 

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• **Generalization.** This is a strategy “in which case a concrete specific example that has made an impact on people’s mental models is generalized to more general knowledge or attitudes, or even fundamental ideologies” (370). For example, the Bush Administration uses the tragedy of 9/11 to make general statements regarding terrorism and the war on terror.

As van Dijk points out, critical discourse analysis “must in turn be embedded in a broader social, political or cultural theory of the situations, contexts, institutions, groups and overall power relations that enable or result from such ‘symbolic’ structures” (Principles 259). In this sense, postcolonial theory can be used to establish the context and the implications of the discourse.

The aim of CDA is much like that of postcolonial theory—it seeks to analyze, understand, and expose the inequities inherent in dominant discourse and ideology. van Dijk states, “[Critical discourse analysts’] hope, if illusory, is change through critical understanding. Their perspective, if possible, that of those who suffer most from dominance and inequality. Their critical targets are the power elites that enact, sustain, legitimate, condone or ignore social inequality and injustice” (Principles 252).

CDA not only analyzes the ways in which dominant groups attack, discredit, and marginalize other groups, it also looks at the means by which they are able to manipulate public opinion. In the rhetoric regarding the war on terror, for example, President Bush uses his role as the leader of our country to have a “one-sided” conversation with the American public; we are aware of the situation based solely on his interpretation and discourse. According to van Dijk, “Such processes of persuasion involve not only
persuasive argumentation and rhetoric, or congenial opinions, but also the authority with which the politicians and the media are able to present such models" (Principles 268).

van Dijk recognizes the limitations of CDA. He writes, "[It] does not yet provide solutions to problems or strategies to fight inequality. [...] Without a thoroughly founded criticism of those authorities or institutions who are responsible for the inequalities, we are no more than ‘free-floating intellectuals’" (Handbook 7). It does, however, "[provide] us with rather powerful, while subtle and precise, insights to pinpoint the everyday manifestations and displays of social problems in communication and interaction" (Handbook 7).
CHAPTER 3

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the Bush Administration faced an unusual situation. In his public addresses, President George W. Bush not only had to comfort and reassure the nation, he had to define the enemy and what came to be known as the “war on terror.” Perhaps more than any other time in history, the world was listening. In Plan of Attack, political journalist and Washington Post reporter Bob Woodward writes, “Roughly two-thirds of the American people thought Bush was a strong leader. They might disapprove of his performance as president, disagree with his policies or not like him, but a strong leader could generally prevail with his agenda if he stood up and pushed for it—in other words played politics” (91). In addition, due to the intense media coverage following the terrorist attacks, Americans were gripped with fear and a distrust of foreigners, particularly those of Arab descent. The conditions were optimal for a captive audience.

For this study, I have chosen four public addresses that represent the most crucial time in terms of gaining support from the American public as well as from a global audience. To illustrate the issues of dominance and marginalization, I have analyzed the following speeches:
Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union, January 29, 2002. Although Bush’s address to the nation on September 20, 2001 marked the beginning of his war on terror speeches, it was not until his 2002 State of the Union address that he outlined the “Iraqi threat.” This speech—also known as the “Axis of Evil” speech in which North Korea, Iran, and Iraq are labeled as threats to the “peace of the world”—focuses on bringing Americans together, while polarizing US and THEM. Additionally, Bush defines the “enemy,” and sets the stage for military action outside Afghanistan: “Our war on terror is well begun, but it is only begun. This campaign may not be finished on our watch—yet it must be and it will be waged on our watch” (135). At this time, Americans, for the most part, supported the war in Afghanistan, but talk of war in Iraq was beginning to create a rift. With public support for the Bush Administration at “historic levels” (Online NewsHour), this speech gave Bush the opportunity to bolster support for his plans in the Middle East.

Address to the Nation on Iraq from Cincinnati, Ohio, October 7, 2002. After his 2002 State of the Union address, Bush’s subsequent public addresses became part of a “campaign” in which he sought support for his Iraq policies. This speech was given on the eve of the congressional vote to authorize use of force against Iraq. The following morning, Washington Post journalist Karen De Young wrote, “Bush spoke in a televised speech aides said was scheduled so that he could explain his Iraqi policy directly to the American people. Although it seems likely that the resolution Bush seeks will pass both houses of Congress by the end of the week, polls show that

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7 Zbigniew Brzezinski, author of The Choice: Global Domination or Global Leadership, writes, “The inclusion of North Korea in the ‘axis of evil’ was widely interpreted as a deliberate effort to obscure the narrower, one-sided American preoccupation with proliferation specifically in the Middle Eastern region” (32).
public support is waning. Most Americans still support war against Iraq but have
questions about its timing and the lack of support from allies” (A1). In this speech,
Bush is very candid as he seeks to justify what he perceives to be the “Iraqi threat.”

- **Address to the Nation on Iraq from the U.S.S. Abraham Lincoln, May 1, 2003.** In this
  speech, which is also referred to as the “End of Combat” speech, Bush announces
  from the deck of the U.S.S. Abraham Lincoln, an aircraft carrier returning from the
  Middle East, that major combat operations have ended in Iraq. This speech is
  particularly salient for its context—Bush landing on the U.S.S. Abraham Lincoln via
  military jet and clad in a flight suit plays out like a Hollywood production. Senator
  Robert C. Byrd, in a response to the President’s speech, writes, “As I watched the
  President’s fighter jet swoop down onto the deck of the aircraft carrier Abraham
  Lincoln, I could not help but contrast the reported simple dignity of President Lincoln
  at Gettysburg with the flamboyant showmanship of President Bush aboard the USS
  Abraham Lincoln” (par. 2). However, this speech follows a war whose massive
  television coverage allowed us to see the destruction and devastating loss of life. In
  this sense, the speech serves to justify the actions in Iraq while it establishes the
  strength and might of the United States.

- **Address to the Nation on the War on Terror, September 7, 2003.** In the months
  following the “end of combat in Iraq,” it became quite clear to the American people
  that the war was not over. In this speech, Bush urges Americans to be patient: “This
  will take time and require sacrifice. Yet we will do what is necessary, we will spend
  what is necessary, to achieve this essential victory in the war on terror, to promote
  freedom and to make our own nation more secure” (1164). In addition, he emphasizes
US vs. THEM and GOOD vs. EVIL to engage the continued support of the American public.

Together, these speeches define the “war on terror,” appeal to American exceptionalism, and create dialectical tensions that serve to demonize and marginalize the Other.

**Thematic Elements and Key Patterns**

Through my examination of these speeches, I found that many of Teun van Dijk’s categories of analysis are applicable. For example, all of the speeches are polarizing—pitting US (America) against THEM (Iraq/Muslims). Of course, the United States is portrayed as moral, civilized, strong, and helpful, while they are rendered evil, aggressive, uncivilized, and weak or helpless. According to van Dijk, “If such ‘polarized’ models are consistent with negative attitudes or ideologies, they may be used to sustain existing attitudes or form new negative attitudes. One of the strategic ways to make sure that such generalizations are made is to emphasize that the current model is ‘typical’ and not incidental or exceptional, and that the negative actions of the Others cannot be explained or excused” (Principles 263-64).

Bush frequently cites the events of September 11, 2001, in his speeches. He does this by utilizing two rhetorical strategies. On the one hand, he uses the tragedy of 9/11 to make generalized statements about the war on terror and Iraq. In doing so, he implies an association between the terrorist attacks and Saddam Hussein. For example, “The battle of Iraq is one victory in a war on terror that began on September the 11th, 2001, and still goes on. That terrible morning, 19 evil men, the shock troops of a hateful ideology, gave
America and the civilized world a glimpse of their ambitions” (5/1/2003, 517).

Furthermore, in his Cincinnati address he says, “The attacks of September the 11th showed our country that vast oceans no longer protect us from danger. Before that tragic date, we had only hints of Al Qaida’s [sic] plans and designs. Today in Iraq, we see a threat whose outlines are far more clearly defined and whose consequences could be far more deadly. Saddam Hussein’s actions have put us on notice, and there is no refuge from our responsibilities” (1720). A close reading of these paragraphs reveals that Bush does not directly link Saddam Hussein and 9/11; however, most audience members will hear these sentences spoken together and assume a connection.

The other strategy involves presenting the United States and Americans as victims. As van Dijk points out in “The Reality of Racism,” when the Other is presented as a threat, “then the ingroup needs to be represented as a victim of such a threat” (224). Using such a tragedy to make general statements regarding the war on terror and presenting the U.S. as the victim both serve to justify going to war in Iraq and are certainly meant to play on the emotions of the American public, but as Senator Robert C. Byrd points out in his response to the president’s May 1, 2003 “End of Combat” speech, “It may make for grand theater to describe Saddam Hussein as an ally of al Qaeda or to characterize the fall of Baghdad as a victory in the war on terror, but stirring rhetoric does not necessarily reflect sobering reality. Not one of the 19 […] hijackers was an Iraqi. In fact, there is not one shred of evidence to link the September 11 attack on the [U.S.] to Iraq” (par. 5).

Another strategy that Bush often employs is to give examples or tell personal stories to illustrate a point or create a more forceful impact on his audience. For example, in his
2002 State of the Union Address, Bush says, “For many Americans, these 4 months have brought sorrow and pain that will never completely go away. Every day a retired firefighter returns to Ground Zero to feel closer to his two sons who died there. At a memorial in New York, a little boy left his football with a note for his lost father: ‘Dear Daddy, please take this to heaven. I don’t want to play football until I can play with you again some day’ ” (134). These vignettes not only play on the theme of “victim” by referring to the horrific effects of 9/11, they evoke images that would tug at the heart of the most cynical American.

Similarly, Bush often refers to authority figures to lend credence to his assertions and to demonstrate cohesiveness. For instance, in his Cincinnati address, he refers to a former chief weapons inspector to bolster his allegations that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction (1716-17). Additionally, in the same speech he implores, “America must not ignore the threat gathering against us,” and quotes President John F. Kennedy (1718). A bit later he says, “[T]wo administrations, mine and President Clinton’s, have stated that regime change in Iraq is the only certain means of removing a great danger to our Nation” (1719). Not only does he reference two very popular presidents, he references two Democratic presidents. The inference is one of consensus among Republicans and Democrats, and serves to appease those who may not support the idea of going to war in Iraq.

In the 2003 preface to his book Orientalism, Edward W. Said writes, “Reflection, debate, rational argument, moral principle based on a secular notion that human beings must create their own history have been replaced by abstract ideas that celebrate American or Western exceptionalism, denigrate the relevance of context, and regard
other cultures with derisive contempt" (xxvii). A thorough analysis of the four speeches reveals a pattern used by Bush that justifies the war in Iraq primarily through positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. While many of van Dijk’s categories of analysis are utilized, these war on terror speeches exemplify three distinct themes: American exceptionalism, demonization of Iraq/Muslims, and marginalization of the Other.

**American Exceptionalism**

Under the premise of American exceptionalism, the strength, morality, and civility of the United States and its citizens are emphasized. For example, when Bush announces that major combat operations have ended in his May 1, 2003 speech, he legitimates the U.S. action in Iraq by using such phrases as “noble cause” (516), “great moral advance” (516), and “patient justice” (517). He further justifies the war: “In these 19 months that changed the world, our actions have been focused and deliberate and proportionate to the offense” (517), and “American values and American interests lead in the same direction: We stand for human liberty” (517). And in his 2002 State of the Union address, he says, “America will lead by defending liberty and justice because they are right and true and unchanging for all people everywhere” (138). The implication here is that we know what is best for all people.

Bush refers to the “civilized world” throughout all four speeches; in his September 7, 2003 address, he asserts, “Terrorists in Iraq have attacked representatives of the civilized world, and opposing them must be the cause of the civilized world” (1165). Of course, the implication is that Iraq and the Middle East in general are “uncivilized.” As such, Bush draws largely upon positive self-presentation and national self-glorification, and he
does so by presenting America as “the chosen,” by stressing that good—“we”—will prevail, and by utilizing consensus and populism to create a sense of solidarity.

A dominant theme in all of Bush’s discourse is that America and its citizens have been “chosen”; it is as if we have been given the responsibility to rid the world of terror and “democratize” all nations. For example, in his 2002 State of the Union address, he asserts, “History has called America and our allies to action, and it is both our responsibility and our privilege to fight freedom’s fight” (135). In the same speech, he insists that because we have been given this responsibility, we must act accordingly. He depicts Americans as unique, as having a duty or job to do. To lend even more gravity, he invokes God and history:

Beyond all differences of race or creed, we are one country, mourning together and facing danger together. Deep in the American character, there is honor, and it is stronger than cynicism. And many have discovered again that even in tragedy—especially in tragedy—God is near.

In a single instant, we realized that this will be a decisive decade in the history of liberty, that we’ve been called to a unique role in human events. Rarely has the world faced a choice more clear or consequential. (138-39)

In his Cincinnati speech, in which he feels the need to bolster support among average Americans, he continues his theme of “the chosen” while also creating a sense of unity—a sense that we are all in this together: “We did not ask for this present challenge, but we accept it. Like other generations of Americans, we will meet the responsibility of defending human liberty against violence and aggression. By our resolve, we will give strength to others. By our courage, we will give hope to others. And by our actions, we
will secure the peace and lead the world to a better day” (1720). He closes his September 7, 2003, speech with: “Fellow citizens: We’ve been tested these past 24 months, and the dangers have not passed. Yet Americans are responding with courage and confidence. We accept the duties of our generation. We are active and resolute in our own defense. We are serving in freedom’s cause—and that is the cause of all mankind” (1166).

In addition to giving Americans a special status, Bush often avows that good (“we”) will overcome evil, in essence asserting that “we” will win the war. For example, “Our enemies believed America was weak and materialistic, that we would splinter in fear and selfishness. They were as wrong as they are evil. The American people have responded magnificently, with courage and compassion, strength and resolve” (1/29/2002, 137). He also states, “Through the gathering momentum of millions of acts of service and decency and kindness, I know we can overcome evil with greater good” (1/29/2002, 138). In his October 7, 2002 speech, the need for stronger language is obvious: “And through its inaction, the United States would resign itself to a future of fear. That is not the America I know. That is not the America I serve. We refuse to live in fear. This nation, in World War and in cold war, has never permitted the brutal and lawless to set history’s course. Now as before, we will secure our Nation, protect our freedom, and help others to find freedom of their own” (1720).

Despite widespread support from Americans, Bush faced skepticism and opposition both at home and abroad regarding action in Iraq. Therefore, uniting Americans and creating a sense of solidarity was vital. Regarding the congressional vote to authorize the use of military force, he says, “The resolution will tell the United Nations and all nations that America speaks with one voice and is determined to make the demands of the
It was also important that he blur party lines. During his 2002 State of the Union address, he says:

September the 11th brought out the best in America and the best in this Congress. And I join the American people in applauding your unity and resolve. Now Americans deserve to have this same spirit directed toward addressing problems here at home. I'm a proud member of my party. Yet as we act to win the war, protect our people, and create jobs in America, we must act, first and foremost, not as Republicans, not as Democrats but as Americans. (135-36)

Building on the theme of "the chosen," Bush attempts to make Americans feel as if we have an important role in the war on terror. This, in turn, adds to the sense that Americans are unified. For example, in his "Axis of Evil" speech, he says, "And as government works to better secure our homeland, America will continue to depend on the eyes and ears of alert citizens" (136). He follows this statement with an illustration of the flight crew and passengers who subdued an Al Qaeda operative who was armed with explosives. In telling this story, ordinary Americans become heroes. It also instills a sense of fear, a sense that what happened on September 11, 2001 could happen again. Later in the same speech, he emphasizes once again that we have a role: "None of us would ever wish the evil that was done on September the 11th. Yet, after America was attacked, it was as if our entire country looked into a mirror and saw our better selves. We were reminded that we are citizens with obligations to each other, to our country, and to history. We began to think less of the goods we can accumulate and more about the good we can do" (137) (emphasis added).
Demonization of the Enemy

In his war on terror speeches, Bush creates a vivid portrait of the enemy. He accomplishes this predominantly through negative other-presentation, and also through fostering a climate of fear. In his 2002 State of the Union address, Bush sets the stage by stating: “What we have found in Afghanistan confirms that, far from ending there, our war against terror is only beginning. [...] Thousands of dangerous killers, schooled in the methods of murder, often supported by outlaw regimes, are now spread throughout the world like ticking timebombs, set to go off without warning” (134). In addition to referring to “dangerous killers,” “murder,” and “outlaw regimes,” using the metaphor “ticking timebombs” lends the situation gravity and a sense of urgency. It also ties in with his speculation that Saddam Hussein possesses weapons of mass destruction.

Furthermore, the implication is that terrorists = Arabs/Muslims. For example, he says, “A terrorist underworld, including groups like Hamas, Hizballah, Islamic Jihad, Jaish-e-Mohammed, operates in remote jungles and deserts and hides in the centers of large cities” (1/29/2002, 135). All of these groups hail from the Middle East. Unfortunately, this reinforces Americans’ attitudes toward Arabs/Muslims in the aftermath of September 11. According to the New York Times, hate crimes against Arab-Americans and Muslim-Americans increased dramatically immediately after 9/11. “From Sept. 11, 2001, to Feb. 14, the F.B.I. said it opened 414 hate crime investigations involving attacks or threats against Arab-American targets, [...]. Among the crimes were murders, attempted murders and assaults and arson attacks against mosques and Arab-American owned businesses” (“F.B.I. Warns” A16).
As Bush pinpoints the “Axis of Evil” in his 2002 State of the Union address, he states that Iraq supports terrorism, and that they are developing anthrax (135). The significance of this, in light of the events involving anthrax-laced letters that took place in the United States following 9/11⁸, is that Bush seems to be suggesting that Saddam Hussein may be responsible. This not only demonizes him, it makes Americans angry and fearful and therefore more willing to support Bush’s Iraq initiative.

He ends his “Axis of Evil” speech by polarizing US and THEM: “Our enemies send other people’s children on missions of suicide and murder. They embrace tyranny and death as a cause and a creed. We stand for a different choice, made long ago on the day of our founding. We affirm it again today. We choose freedom and the dignity of every life” (139). Additionally, by referring to “our founding,” he appeals to Americans’ sense of patriotism.

Bush’s October 7, 2002, address to the nation is particularly salient as a vehicle for demonizing Saddam Hussein, Iraq, and the terrorists. With many Americans questioning the decision to go to war in Iraq, the speech is intended to make as strong a case as

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⁸ In the months following the September 11 terrorist attacks, letters contaminated with anthrax were sent through the U.S. postal system to NBC News anchor Tom Brokaw, Democratic Senator Tom Daschle, and Democratic Senator Patrick Leahy, among others. According to the New York Times, “Since the anthrax attacks began, four people have died from inhalation anthrax, including two Washington postal workers, and six others have contracted the disease. At least seven people have contracted skin anthrax, a much less serious form of the illness that does not necessarily require hospitalization” (Shenon A1+). Although there was much speculation as to who was responsible—including “an organized terrorist group” (Johnston B6)—the F.B.I. has yet to solve this case.
possible. In it, he is very forthright; after thanking those in the audience for their attendance, he begins: “Tonight I want to take a few minutes to discuss a grave threat to peace and America’s determination to lead the world in confronting that threat. The threat comes from Iraq” (1716). He then uses such words as: “history of aggression,” “arsenal of terror,” “murderous tyrant,” and “merciless nature of its regime” (1716). The use of such forceful language underscores the perceived threat of imminent danger.

In the same speech, Bush refers to Saddam Hussein as “a homicidal dictator who is addicted to weapons of mass destruction” (1717). Of course, “homicidal” is a very negative descriptor, but adding the word “addicted” implies—in the American lexicon—a sense of being out of control. Tying a lack of restraint to “weapons of mass destruction” in a post-9/11 world undeniably plays on Americans’ fears. Furthermore, the phrase “weapons of mass destruction,” which is now almost exclusively associated with Iraq, is used liberally throughout all of Bush’s war on terror speeches, and has even become a popular and oft-cited part of the American lexicon, frequently referred to as “WMD.” In his Cincinnati address, Bush spends a good deal of time discussing weapons of mass destruction, often giving very specific and technical details. For example, he says, “Iraq has attempted to purchase high-strength aluminum tubes and other equipment needed for gas centrifuges, which are used to enrich uranium for nuclear weapons” (1718).

According to van Dijk, emphasizing irrelevant details is a form of manipulation; in order to “hinder understanding,” a speaker may use “more complex sentences and abstruse words” (Discourse 366). Giving such detailed information also underscores the severity of the situation, and gives Bush more credibility and authority.
Much of Bush’s demonizing is used to justify going to war in Iraq. In his attempts to link Saddam Hussein and Iraq with Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups, he uses specific examples and numbers to strengthen his argument. For example, he says, “Over the years, Iraq has provided safe haven to terrorists such as Abu Nidal, whose terrorist organization carried out more than 90 terrorist attacks in 20 countries that killed or injured nearly 900 people, including 12 Americans. Iraq has also provided safe haven to Abu Abbas, who was responsible for seizing the Achille Lauro and killing an American passenger” (10/7/2002, 1717). Further into that speech, Bush invokes the memory of another dictator: “The dictator of Iraq is a student of Stalin, using murder as a tool of terror and control, […]. On Saddam Hussein’s orders, opponents have been decapitated, wives and mothers of political opponents have been systematically raped as a method of intimidation, and political prisoners have been forced to watch their own children being tortured” (1720). Comparing Saddam Hussein with Communist dictator Joseph Stalin is perhaps meant to stir up images of the Cold War, when Americans were so fearful of the enemy they rushed to build bomb shelters in their homes. In addition, talk of decapitation, rape, and torture bring to mind shuttering images of unspeakable acts that surely resound with most Americans.

Finally, Bush utilizes what van Dijk refers to as “populism” to create a sense that everyone agrees or supports his ideas regarding Saddam Hussein. In his Cincinnati speech, for instance, he says, “Members of Congress of both political parties and members of the United Nations Security Council agree that Saddam Hussein is a threat to peace and must disarm. We agree that the Iraqi dictator must not be permitted to threaten America and the world with horrible poisons and diseases and gases and atomic weapons.
Since we all agree on this goal, the issue is: How can we best achieve it?” (1716). Later in the same speech, he asks, “If we know Saddam Hussein has dangerous weapons today—and we do—does it make any sense for the world to wait to confront him as he grows even stronger and develops even more dangerous weapons?” (1717). Because of the way these questions are presented, it appears as if the only logical approach is to go after Saddam Hussein.

Marginalization of the Other

In his speeches, Bush often makes comments about or refers to Arabs/Muslims, particularly Iraqis, in ways that depict them as helpless and incapable of determining their own destiny. This is especially relevant to Said’s theory of Orientalism and the premise of postcolonial theory. In the 2003 preface to *Orientalism,* Said writes,

> What our leaders and their intellectual lackeys seem incapable of understanding is that history cannot be swept clean like a blackboard, clean so that “we” might inscribe our own future there and impose our own forms of life for these lesser people to follow. It is quite common to hear high officials in Washington and elsewhere speak of changing the map of the Middle East, as if ancient societies and myriad peoples can be shaken up like so many peanuts in a jar. (xviii)

As a consequence of these characterizations, the United States is often portrayed as “savior” or “gatekeeper.” The innuendo is that we must come to their—the Other—rescue. For example, in referring to what the United States has accomplished in Afghanistan, Bush declares, “In 4 short months, our Nation has […] saved a people from starvation, and freed a country from brutal oppression” (1/29/2002, 134). In another
speech he says, “We continue to help the Afghan people lay roads, restore hospitals, and educate all of their children” (5/1/2003, 517). In both of these statements, the implication is that the Afghan people are completely helpless; they are, in essence, reduced to an imbecilic or childlike status.

America is often presented as the dominant force, and one that must fight not only for itself, but also the world. For example: “Our Nation will continue to be steadfast and patient and persistent in the pursuit of two great objectives. First, we will shut down terrorist camps, disrupt terrorist plans, and bring terrorists to justice. And second, we must prevent the terrorists and regimes who seek chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons from threatening the United States and the world” (1/29/2002, 134). In other words, WE MUST SAVE THE WORLD! In addition, he emphasizes the strength of the United States over other nations: “My hope is that all nations will heed our call and eliminate the terrorist parasites who threaten their countries and our own. […] But some governments will be timid in the face of terror. And make no mistake about it: If they do not act, America will” (1/29/2002, 135).

In his September 7, 2003, speech, Bush justifies the lack of progress in Iraq by referring to World War II, in which the U.S. was ultimately successful:

America has done this kind of work before. Following World War II, we lifted up the defeated nations of Japan and Germany, and stood with them as they built representative governments. We committed years and resources to this cause. And that effort has been repaid many times over in the three generations of friendship and peace. America today accepts the
challenge of helping Iraq in the same spirit—for their sake, and our own.

(1164).

Of course, today both Japan and Germany symbolize modern capitalistic societies, much like the United States. Additionally, by stating that America “accepts the challenge,” Bush fosters that sense of solidarity.

In his 2002 State of the Union address, Bush asserts, “And we have a great opportunity during this time of war to lead the world toward the values that will bring lasting peace” (138). The implication here is our values, which are perceived as better than those of the Other. In the ‘End of Combat’ speech, values are again highlighted: “We are committed to freedom in Afghanistan, in Iraq, and in a peaceful Palestine. The advance of freedom is the surest strategy to undermine the appeal of terror in the world. Where freedom takes hold, hatred gives way to hope. When freedom takes hold, men and women turn to the peaceful pursuit of a better life. American values and American interests lead in the same direction: We stand for human liberty” (517). The sense of moral superiority in these statements is palpable, and serves to further polarize US and THEM.

Additionally, Bush is often condescending when referring to Iraqis. For example, “We are encouraging the orderly transfer of sovereignty and authority to the Iraqi people” (9/7/2003, 1165) (emphasis added). Also, “Iraq is ready to take the next steps toward self-government. [...] From the outset, I have expressed confidence in the ability of the Iraqi people to govern themselves. Now they must rise to the responsibilities of a free people and secure the blessings of their own liberty” (9/7/2003, 1165). Like the Afghan people in the earlier examples, the Iraqis are treated disparagingly; Bush’s
rhetoric is arrogant and patronizing. The overt implication is that we are better than they are, and with our help, perhaps they will be able to take care of themselves. In addition, the innuendo is that we are providing them with the basic necessities of life: “Men and women in every culture need liberty like they need food and water and air” (5/1/2003, 517).

Bush also often talks about what will come out of the war—the “rebuilding” process. For example, “We have difficult work to do in Iraq. We’re bringing order to parts of that country that remain dangerous. […] We’re helping to rebuild Iraq, […]” (5/1/2003, 517). He also states: “In Iraq, we are helping the long suffering people of that country to build a decent and democratic society at the center of the Middle East. Together we are transforming a place of torture chambers and mass graves into a nation of laws and free institutions. This undertaking is difficult and costly—yet worthy of our country, and critical to our security” (9/7/2003, 1163). And, “This budget request will also support our commitment to helping the Iraqi and Afghan people rebuild their own nations, after decades of oppression and mismanagement. […] This effort is essential to the stability of those nations, and therefore, to our own security” (9/7/2003, 1165). Of course, both Iraq and Afghanistan will be “rebuilt” by our workers, with our money, and in the way we want it to be built.

By marginalizing the Other—in this case, the Iraqi and Afghan people—Bush completely negates their culture and way of life. For example, he states, “And America needs citizens to extend the compassion of our country to every part of the world. So we will renew the promise of the Peace Corps, […] and ask it to join a new effort to encourage development and education and opportunity in the Islamic world” (1/29/2002,
“Development” and “opportunity” imply capitalistic—Western—endeavors. Once again, Bush insinuates that all people desire the American way of life:

America believes that all people are entitled to hope and human rights, to the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity. [...] America is a friend to the people of Iraq. Our demands are directed only at the regime that enslaves them and threatens us. When these demands are met, the first and greatest benefit will come to Iraqi men, women, and children. [...] The long captivity of Iraq will end, and an era of new hope will begin. [...] Freed from the weight of oppression, Iraq’s people will be able to share in the progress and prosperity of our time. If military action is necessary, the United States and our allies will help the Iraqi people rebuild their economy and create the institutions of liberty in a unified Iraq at peace with its neighbors. (10/7/2002, 1720)

In order for democracy to have any hope of working in the Middle East, Arabs/Muslims must be treated with the dignity and respect that Bush insists “all people are entitled to.” While demonizing and marginalizing them may have helped earn the support of the American public, it is fueling tensions between East and West, strengthening stereotypes, and frankly, resulting in more terrorism.

My analysis of these four war on terror speeches reveals rhetoric that is constructed through American idealism and exceptionalism, and that fosters an ideology of dominance and inequality. In the next chapter, I will discuss the implications of this, as well as address the ethical concerns.
CHAPTER 4

EVALUATION

As many critics of the Iraq war have pointed out, it was necessary for the Bush Administration to "sell" the idea of invading Iraq to the American public as well as the global community. After all, neither Osama bin Laden nor al Qaeda had any apparent ties to Iraq or Saddam Hussein. In the months following the terrorist attacks, the administration began dialectically framing this perceived threat from Iraq in terms of good vs. evil in an effort to garner the support it needed. In Hegemony or Survival, noted political thinker Noam Chomsky discusses the "propaganda" campaign aimed at linking Saddam Hussein and 9/11: "The campaign [...] was highly successful in shifting attitudes. It soon drove American public opinion off the global spectrum and helped the administration achieve electoral aims and establish Iraq as a proper test case for the newly announced doctrine of resort to force at will" (3). The results of the massive public relations campaign waged by the Bush Administration have had—and will continue to have for some time to come—far-reaching effects. America’s future role in the global community is in question as many argue that we have lost our legitimacy.

Of course, many factors played a role in the outcome of the campaign. In addition to the general climate of fear following the terrorist attacks, America’s views of itself and the outside world go far in explaining reactions to President George W. Bush’s war on
terror rhetoric. In this chapter, I will briefly explicate what it means to be “American,” and why anti-Americanism is so prevalent around the world. Additionally, I will discuss the political, social, cultural, and ethical implications of Bush’s war on terror speeches.

Americans and “Americanism”

According to many opinion makers and political pundits around the world, the Bush Administration successfully “duped” the American public into supporting a case for war in Iraq. But it is not quite as simple as framing an issue in a certain manner. Many factors contribute to the American psyche, particularly in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks. When the two jetliners hit the twin towers of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, America’s sense of safety, of exceptionalism, and even its tendency toward insularity, were shattered along with the buildings.

It is not difficult to imagine the level of fear most Americans felt in the wake of 9/11. Aside from the horrific events themselves, the cocoon in which America had been historically ensconced was penetrated. In times of crisis, it is only natural to rely on a figure of authority for explanation and reassurance. When Bush spoke to the American public in the days following the terrorist attacks, his strength and resolve were admirable. He was the rock on which his captive audience could lean. It was not long, however, before the Bush Administration began its campaign against Iraq and Saddam Hussein.

Soon, as Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke point out, “The American public was barraged with a litany of doomsday scenarios” (209). Douglas Kellner posits that the “mass hysteria” created by the Bush Administration “render[ed] the population malleable to manipulation” (Media Spectacle 11). Consequently, while much of what was said in
the war on terror speeches left many in the global audience as well as critics here at home skeptical, a majority of Americans were buying it. “Americans were more willing to believe that Saddam possessed WMDs and that a connection existed between Saddam and 9/11 and Saddam and Al Qaeda partially because they suffered from heightened levels of anxiety and fear of terrorism in the period following 9/11,” argue University of Southern California communication scholars Amelia Arsenault and Manuel Castells (289).

Psychologist Eileen L. Zurbriggen suggests Americans’ inability to see through the misinformation propagated by the Bush Administration corresponds to the inclination of trauma victims to be “blind” to a perpetrator’s actions when the victim is dependent on the perpetrator. In “Lies in a Time of Threat: Betrayal Blindness and the 2004 U.S. Presidential Election,” she writes:

> In an era in which the United States is the sole global superpower, every citizen of this country [and, indeed, every living creature on the planet] is affected by the policies and actions of the U.S. president and is therefore dependent on him, at least to some extent. […] It would then become more difficult for [them] to notice the administration’s deceptions and fabrications at the time they are being uttered, or to remember them clearly at a later date. (191)

In addition to the general tendency to respect the office of the presidency, Americans were deeply vulnerable in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks and therefore easily swayed. It can certainly be argued that the Bush Administration took advantage of the collective frame of mind during this time. Benjamin R. Barber queries, “One might ask
whether any terrorist can have spread fear more effectively than the American
government inadvertently has done as it dutifully passes on random threats against
unspecified targets and warns that further attacks are a virtual certainty” (Fear 25).

Another aspect of the American persona, as outlined in chapter 3, is a sense of
exceptionalism. Barber writes, “From its founding, America regarded itself as unique and
hence exempt from the laws that otherwise govern the life and destiny of other nations”
(Fear 47). Americans have historically presented themselves as distinct. Indeed, posits
Zbigniew Brzezinski, America possesses an “established inclination to see itself as the
model for everyone else, with American preponderance even increasing the country’s
sense of its moral vocation” (11). Stephen Hartnett and Laura Stengrim agree: “[…]
many in the United States appear to think of the United States as the world, as if the
United States were not one nation among many but a universally accepted model to
which the world must inevitably look for guidance” (283). As my analysis in chapter 3
reveals, the Bush Administration relied on America’s vision of itself as exceptional to
further its agenda regarding Iraq. According to Barber, “[Bush] has defined that war in
terms of a vision of exceptional American virtue and a countervision of foreign
malevolence that may strike outsiders as self-righteous […] but which is powerfully
motivating within the United States and which gives to his policies an uncompromising
militancy invulnerable to world public opinion” (Fear 39).

It is this pride and sense of being unique that also creates a very strong nationalism
among Americans. Richard Crockatt writes,

> What is not in doubt is the allegiance of a majority of Americans to certain
> profoundly unifying symbols, attitudes, and values that can collectively be
called Americanism. There is no more eloquent expression of this sentiment, which is sufficiently potent and historically grounded to qualify as an ideology, than the unity displayed by the American people's reaction to September 11. (37-38)

The idea of being violated by the terrorists reinforced the notion of coming together, of being one nation. Crockatt posits, “America has always been by its natural composition a multicultural society, but that very diversity has placed a premium on adherence to symbols of national unity and national distinctiveness” (15). For example, immigrants have always been encouraged to discard their “old world” identities and become completely American. This, in part, can explain why Americans are so receptive to the rhetoric of US vs. THEM.

Another characteristic that can be identified as uniquely American is the desire for isolation. Although terrorist attacks occur more frequently in other parts of the world, and citizens around the world have become somewhat immune to the routine fear these attacks can cause, Americans have been—until September 11, 2001—somewhat isolated from this way of life. America has a long tradition of isolationism, of being insular and concerned primarily with domestic issues. Of course, the tendency toward isolationism is due predominantly to the desire for security, but its stance toward the outside world—particularly before globalization—has been perceived as one of disinterest. This, in part, has contributed to the animosity and anti-American sentiment so prevalent around the world. As Crockatt points out, “To the extent that America is a world unto itself, by virtue of its size, geographical location, social diversity, and economic dynamism, it is often insulated from the reactions that its activity in the world arouses” (8). Indeed, write
Halper and Clarke, "Most Americans are today utterly unaware of the skepticism with which the United States is often viewed internationally, even in Britain" (237). This is perhaps why Americans were so shocked by the events of 9/11, and why we have only recently begun to understand the extent of anti-Americanism.

_Anti-Americanism_

The concept of Americanism inspires both fascination and hatred among the world’s population. According to Crockatt, "Anti-Americanism was both a cause and a consequence of the terrorism of September 11 and, as such, it is central to an understanding of these events" (43). How the rest of the world views America is often paradoxical. On the one hand, there is awe and allure. Perceptions of life in America are based on idealized and/or fantastical depictions in the preponderance of American film and television that has invaded the globe. Many cultures around the world have adopted American social and cultural standards, and citizens from all over the world emigrate to the United States to realize their "American Dream." Nevertheless, this has also fostered resentment and even hatred as indigenous cultures slowly fade and are replaced by "McWorld." It can be argued, however, that this is part of a natural process. Crockatt points out that, "[A]s the leading world power, the United States inevitably attracts opposition. Anti-Americanism has grown in step with the rise of the United States to world power. Like imperial nations of the past, the United States wields disproportionate power that is an object both of attraction and resentment" (46).

On the other hand, American foreign policy and America’s political role in the global community are almost universally regarded as questionable at best, and more often than not, as detrimental to the rest of the world. Chomsky cites a _Time_ magazine poll in which
“more than 80 percent of respondents in Europe regarded the US as the greatest threat to world peace” (41). Specifically, America’s involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as well as other Middle Eastern affairs has spawned the intense hatred and extreme behavior that resulted, among other events, in 9/11. According to Brzezinski, “There is no escape from the historic reality that American involvement in the Middle East is clearly the main reason why terrorism has been directed at America […]” (30).

Nevertheless, the Bush Administration appears oblivious to this fact, and their refusal to acknowledge it only intensifies the conflict. Bush spoke to America and the world the evening of September 11, 2001, about the evil that had occurred; however, writes Peter Singer,

A different president might not […] have jumped to the conclusion that America was attacked because it is ‘the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world.’ That statement ignored America’s role in global politics, and especially in the Middle East. It therefore struck many people in other countries as a painful example of just how self-satisfied America is. (143)

Concurrently, Brzezinski states, “The unwillingness to recognize a historical connection between the rise of anti-American terrorism and America’s involvement in the Middle East makes the formulation of an effective strategic response to terrorism that much more difficult” (31).

America is becoming increasingly isolated from the rest of the world because of the way it is asserting its superpower status. William Finnegan writes, “The depths of hatred that the United States has inspired in some of the world’s most oppressed corners may be
ultimately unfathomable” (53). It is therefore imperative that America not only rethink its policies abroad, but truly consider the effects of its discourse and actions.

**Discourse, Manipulation, and the War on Terror**

The Bush Administration knew they had to build up the perceived threat from Iraq in order to garner support for a preemptive strike. With the help of the media, Americans were inundated with horrifying images of terrorism. Halper and Clarke write, “Fear of terrorism provided the necessary glue to meld otherwise uncorroborated statements, assumptions, predictions, and ideas into a case for war. Official discourse turned the assessment of a hypothetical danger into the absolute proof of a real danger” (209). Americans began to believe the rhetoric. According to Teun van Dijk, manipulation, which is a vital aspect of critical discourse analysis, is inherently linked to power abuse. He writes:

> [T]he general goals of manipulative discourse are the control of the shared social representations of groups of people because these social beliefs in turn control what people do and say in many situations and over a relatively long period. Once people’s attitudes are influenced, for instance on terrorism, little or no further manipulation attempts may be necessary in order for people to act according to these attitudes, for instance to vote in favor of anti-terrorism policies” (Discourse 369).

In other words, once the seed has been planted, beliefs and perceptions become rooted. According to Arsenault and Castells, “framing research suggests that after frequent exposure to pro-war coverage, subjects would be less likely to incorporate corrective
information that threatened to disrupt the dominant news and political frame that the Iraq War was justified" (291). As Zurbriggen suggests, Americans became “blind” to the truth.

In March 2004, approximately one year after the attack on Iraq, the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Government Reform released a report, also known as the Waxman Report, entitled, “Iraq on the Record: The Bush Administration’s Public Statements on Iraq.” This report examines the public statements—from speeches, television appearances, press conferences, and other interviews—made by the Bush Administration (President George Bush, Vice President Richard Cheney, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of State Colin Powell, and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice) regarding Iraq. According to the report, “[T]he five officials made misleading statements about the threat posed by Iraq in 125 public appearances. The report and an accompanying database identify 237 specific misleading statements by the five officials” (i). As the report points out, “The President and his senior advisors have a special obligation to describe accurately the national security threats facing the nation. […] Members of Congress and the public see only a partial picture based on the information the President and his advisors decide to release” (1). This rather telling statement exemplifies the power of dominant discourse and power abuse.

The report specifies what each member of the Bush Administration said in discourse leading up to the war in Iraq. For example, “President Bush made 55 misleading statements about the threat posed by Iraq in 27 separate public statements or appearances. […] Of the 55 misleading statements […], 4 claimed that Iraq posed an urgent threat; 14
exaggerated Iraq’s efforts to develop nuclear weapons; 18 overstated Iraq’s chemical or biological weapons capacity; and 19 misrepresented Iraq’s links to al Qaeda” (25).

Many of the statements to which the report refers come from the four speeches analyzed in this study. The report specifically cites Bush’s October 7, 2002, Cincinnati speech: “In this speech, President Bush made 11 misleading statements about Iraq, the highest number of misleading statements in any single appearance by any of the five officials. In this single appearance, President Bush made misleading statements about Iraq’s nuclear capabilities, Iraq’s efforts to procure aluminum tubes, Iraq’s chemical and biological capabilities, and Iraq’s connection to al Qaeda” (26). Of course, this speech took place just prior to the congressional vote to authorize force in Iraq. Although members of Congress are generally thought to be part of the elite, in this case they were a part of the audience being manipulated.

Not only are Bush’s statements misleading and unethical, they undercut the trust that is placed in our elected officials. Kellner posits, “As the history of recent totalitarian regimes demonstrates, systematic deception and lying rots the very fabric of a political society, and if U.S. democracy is to find new life and a vigorous future there must be public commitments to truth and public rejection of the politics of lying” (16).

Implications

Because the United States is the world’s only superpower, the social, cultural, and political implications of the Bush Administration’s war rhetoric are extensive, and each bears its own ethical concerns. In addition to the misinformation and lies, the four
speeches analyzed in this study demonstrate a lack of understanding or, worse, concern, for political and ethnic differences.

In Bush’s war on terror speeches, he often refers to the societal benefits of the war; for example, how it will provide advantages to the Iraqi people by liberating them and giving them opportunities previously unavailable. He insinuates that a community that was torn apart by its leader—Saddam Hussein—will be rebuilt and be much more cohesive. It has not played out that way. With the increase in violence in Iraq and the threat of civil war, their sense of community has been completely shattered. In addition, because of the manner in which Iraq has been depicted domestically, most Americans now associate it with “weapons of mass destruction” (despite the fact that none were found), terrorism, and extremism. Most of the positive elements of Iraqi life, like the building of schools and hospitals, and voting and elections, are associated with the American presence. Once again, it gives the American public the impression that the Iraqis need us.

Negative framing of the Other has succeeded only in perpetuating stereotypes and misunderstanding of cultural and ethnic differences. This notion that we are a superior and more civilized society only serves to polarize further America from the rest of the world. Moreover, the Bush Administration’s marginalization of the Other has, in effect, deprived them of a voice. The Iraqi people (those not labeled “terrorists”), as revealed in chapter 3, are portrayed as “incapable” and “weak.” This representation serves to justify the Bush Administration’s actions in Iraq, but it is a portrait viewed through American eyes; we refuse to acknowledge the existence of other ideologies or modes of living. In a
true global community, all cultures must be equally represented and respected; difference
must not only be tolerated, but also celebrated.

From an ethical standpoint, Bush’s misleading statements about Iraq not only hurt the
Iraqis; he took advantage of the American public when they were at their most
vulnerable. van Dijk argues that the focus of manipulative discourse is on the societal and
ethical consequences, because “[M]anipulation, socially speaking, is a discursive form of
elite power reproduction that is against the best interests of dominated groups and
[re]produces social inequality” (Discourse 364). In essence, the effect is two-fold—by
manipulating the American public with misleading information, Bush maintains his
authority over his constituency, while subjugating the Other and therefore reinforcing
negative stereotypes.

The political effects of the rhetoric of the war on terror are the most alarming, for
they can be the most catastrophic. The United States has effectively isolated itself from
the rest of the world with its political hubris; even its allies are backing away. According
to Brzezinski, “Conduct that is perceived worldwide as arbitrary could prompt America’s
progressive isolation, undercutting not America’s power to defend itself as such, but
rather its ability to use that power to enlist others in a common effort to shape a more
secure international environment” (4). The misinformation and demonizing of the Other
in the war on terror speeches have served only to increase terrorism. Chomsky posits that
the only link between Iraq and the threat of terror is that the invasion in Iraq has fueled
the terrorists and has led to an increase in Al Qaeda recruitment (19). What is more,
America’s insular and self-absorbed attitude may be its downfall. Brzezinski writes, “A
hegemony is a transient historical phase. Eventually, even if not soon, America’s global
dominance will fade. It is therefore not too early for Americans to seek to determine the shape of their hegemony’s eventual legacy” (213).

By defying international law and acting unilaterally, Bush effectively negated the power of the United Nations. Some critics argue that his actions carry legal as well as ethical ramifications. Peter Singer states, “Bush’s claim that the United Nations would be irrelevant if it did not agree to the use of force against Iraq showed that he had already decided that it was irrelevant—that is, that if it did not go along with what he wanted, he would ignore its decision. […] In the end, it was Bush who made the United Nations irrelevant in regard to Iraq” (192). What is of particular concern is that Bush is setting a precedent that may well affect future international disputes. Although the implicit meaning in disregarding the authority of the United Nations was that the United States, as the sole superpower, could do whatever it wanted, other nations may be inclined to do the same. Global chaos could ensue. As Singer points out:

Whether the danger posed by the combination of new weapons technologies with radical religious and political ideas can be controlled at all is something that only time will tell. In the long run, however, we are more likely to succeed in meeting this threat by international cooperation than by one nation acting unilaterally and in defiance of international law. American preeminence may well prove to be not only unjust, but a tragic mistake with catastrophic consequences. (200)

Another ethical concern is Bush presenting false or misleading information in his war on terror speeches. By justifying the attack on Iraq because Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction, and linking him with al Qaeda and 9/11, Bush completely
discredits himself as well as the United States. The complete and utter disregard for the truth will surely have negative effects in the future. Furthermore, when it became clear that Bush propagated misinformation, he refused to accept any blame or responsibility, essentially brushing off any criticism. Singer writes:

A person of good moral character who takes a false step will admit it, seek to understand what went wrong, and try to prevent something similar from happening again. When Bush's use of misleading intelligence about Iraq was exposed, however, he blocked an open investigation into how he and his staff came to mislead the American public and the world about the basis on which he went to war. Instead, he made further inaccurate statements about when the intelligence was first known to be unsubstantiated and about the events that led to the decision to go to war. (225)

America cannot “go it alone.” It is imperative that America realign itself with its allies, and reestablish its leadership abilities. Moreover, if globalization is going to work, an understanding and acceptance of diversity—of the Other—is imperative. As Brzezinski so succinctly puts it, “With America [...] fated to be the catalyst either for a global community or for global chaos, Americans have the unique historical responsibility to determine which of the two will come to pass. Our choice is between dominating the world and leading it” (xi).
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

As of October 30, 2007, the U.S. death toll in Iraq stands at 3,842; the number of wounded exceeds 28,000. Economically, the war in Iraq has thus far cost the United States over $464 billion, and according to New York Times columnist David Leonhardt, direct and indirect costs (for example, medical expenses for wounded veterans) could exceed $1.2 trillion. A recent poll of the Iraqi people found that a staggering 71% want U.S. troops to withdraw; the vast majority of them believe that the U.S. presence causes more conflict than it prevents (Kull). Terrorist activity has increased around the globe as U.S. actions have only strengthened the resolve of such terrorist organizations as al Qaeda and the Taliban. East and West are more sharply divided. The United States is looked upon with skepticism and distrust by much of the global community. These are but a few examples of the outcome of the Bush Administration’s war on terror.

The dominant discourse of the war on terror may have served a purpose at one time, but it was fleeting. While George W. Bush succeeded in persuading a majority of Americans to support a war in Iraq, ultimately he failed them. As Zbigniew Brzezinski points out:

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9 According to the “Iraq Coalition Casualty Count” at <http://icasualties.org/oif/default.aspx>
10 This figure is current as of October 30, 2007, and can be found at <http://nationalpriorities.org/Cost-of-War/Cost-of-War-3.html>
The president must do more than stir the American people; he must also educate them. The political education of a large democracy cannot be pursued by patriotic slogans, fear-mongering, or self-righteous arrogance. Every politician faces that temptation, and it is politically rewarding to yield to it. But harping on terrorism distorts the public's vision of the world. It breeds the risk of defensive self-isolation, fails to give the public a realistic understanding of the world's complexities, and furthers the fragmentation of the nation's strategic cohesion. (219-20)

As the holder of the highest office in the United States, the president has an overwhelming ability to influence public opinion. In this capacity, Bush is both morally and ethically responsible for the manner in which he informs the public, for not only does it affect our nation domestically, but with globalization the new reality, it affects America's role in the global community. In this study, I have endeavored to reveal the effects of dominant discourse and examine and contextualize America's emerging role in the global community by peering through a lens unclouded by Western assumptions and biases. Although Bush may have said that America was attacked because it is the "brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world," in reality, America's social, cultural, and political influences and practices around the world played a major role. In "The Real Axis of Evil," George Katsiaficas writes:

The absurdity and tragedy of such a world is made even more absurd and tragic by the profound ignorance and insensitivity of the wealthiest planetary citizens regarding the terrible plight of human beings in the periphery.
In such a world, of course, there can be no lasting peace. As long as the wretched of the earth, those at the margins of the world system, are dehumanized, branded as terrorists, and kept out of decision-making, they have no alternative but to carry out insurrection and wage war in order to find justice. (350)

It is therefore critical that we look beyond the suicide bombers and the terrorist training camps and make a serious effort at understanding why terrorism exists.

Using postcolonial theory in the analysis of dominant discourse is one such way to recognize the nuances of what is being said, for, as Raka Shome and Radha Hegde emphasize, “[t]he politics of communication are of central importance in the understanding of the contradictions and ambivalence in our deeply divided world” (261). In focusing on the fragile relationship between East and West, analyzing Bush’s war on terror speeches from a postcolonial point of view helped to expose subtle, implicit statements of racism—specifically, those that serve to demonize or marginalize the Other. Furthermore, using critical discourse analysis as a method for analyzing Bush’s war on terror speeches revealed how Bush attacked, discredited, and marginalized the Iraqis in order to sway public opinion. As Shome and Hegde point out, “[A] postcolonial intervention pushes for more socially responsible problematizations of communication. It is these critiques that will lead eventually to the production of a more just and equitable knowledge base about the third world, the other, and the ‘rest’ of the world” (261).

Despite the benefits of this study, there are a number of limitations. For one, “Americanism”—or, what it means to be “American”—is a complex and historical ideology as well as a rhetorical construction that deserves far greater attention than it was
given here. A more thorough undertaking of this topic would greatly enhance our understanding of the American public's willingness to support the Bush Administration in their bid to go after Saddam Hussein and Iraq. Additionally, although George W. Bush delivered the four war on terror speeches analyzed in this study, many critics believe the real architects behind the Bush Administration's war on terror are Bush's (now former) senior political advisor Karl Rove and Vice President Richard Cheney. A more thorough study might include the rhetoric of all key players. Finally, I would like to point out that, for the purposes of this study, I focused on American ignorance and insensitivity toward the Other—specifically, the Iraqis. However, I am fully aware that Americans, too, are often misunderstood and stereotyped, and I therefore emphasize that all peoples and cultures could benefit from a deeper understanding of the other.

When I began this project, very little scholarship centered on the global implications of communication. Perhaps this study, and others like it, can begin to facilitate research and scholarship with a more universalizing perspective. Once again, the salience of studying dominant discourse within the context of globalization must be emphasized, for communication is one of the foundations of globalization and the new global community. Richard Crockatt writes, "[G]lobalization influences all aspects of life—the economic, political, social, and cultural—with the revolution in communications perhaps being the single most important novel factor, since the increase in speed and volume of information underpins changes in all the other spheres" (115). Future research could focus more on the role of communication in globalization, as well as the effects of new modes of communication on the Other. Additionally, a more in-depth look at the interplay of
politics and communication could further our understanding of dominant discourse and power abuse.

It is vital that we attempt to understand the root of the cause—why terrorists do what they do—rather than simply demonizing and marginalizing them. Until causes of terrorism are addressed, it seems unlikely that military action against terrorists alone can solve the problem. The Bush doctrine is void of diplomacy and is only creating more global strife and tension, not to mention terrorism. It is my hope that this study, in addition to providing insight into the importance of understanding other cultures and peoples, has furthered our understanding of dominant discourse and power abuse, and how they pertain to globalization and the global community.
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