



Media, Wars and Identities - Part One

Baudouin Dupret, Jiri Nekvapil, Ivan Leudar

► To cite this version:

Baudouin Dupret, Jiri Nekvapil, Ivan Leudar. Media, Wars and Identities - Part One: Broadcasting Islam, Muslims and the Middle East. B. Dupret, J. Nekvapil, I. Leudar. *Ethnographic Studies*, No 9, 80 [http://www.socialsciences.manchester.ac.uk/disciplines/sociology/about/events/ethnography/jou, 2007. halshs-00195864

HAL Id: halshs-00195864

<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-00195864>

Submitted on 7 Jan 2008

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

Ethnographic Studies

Issue No. 9

November 2007

Editorial policy

Ethnographic Studies is a journal for work in ethnography and ethnomethodology. Its aim is to promote qualitative inquiry in the human sciences. The policy of the journal is to publish mainly empirical studies, though it will also include theoretical/philosophical work which relates to current issues and debates in qualitative inquiry.

Persons interested in contributing to the journal should send four paper copies and one disc copy of their completed article to Shirley Harris at the journal. All papers will be sent to two referees drawn from the members of the Advisory Board. Proposals for papers may be discussed informally with either of the editors.

Editors:

David Francis, *Manchester Metropolitan University*

Stephen Hester, *University of Wales, Bangor*

Advisory Board:

Graham Button, *Sheffield Hallam University*

Jeff Coulter, *Boston University*

Peter Eglin, *Wilfrid Laurier University*

Paul ten Have, *University of Amsterdam*

John Hughes, *University of Lancaster*

Karin Knorr-Ketina, *University of Bielefeld*

Ivan Leudar, *University of Manchester*

Doug Macbeth, *Ohio State University*

Anne Murcott, *South Bank University*

Robert Prus, *University of Waterloo*

Stanley Raffel, *University of Edinburgh*

Paul Rock, *London School of Economics*

Wes Sharrock, *University of Manchester*

Roger Slack, *University of Wales, Bangor*

Graham Watson, *University of Calgary*

Rod Watson, *University of Manchester*

Send correspondence to:

Shirley Harris,

Ethnographic Studies

c/o School of Social Science

University of Wales, Bangor

Gwynedd LL57 2DG

Tel: +01248-383886 Fax: +01248-382085

E mail: s.harris@bangor.ac.uk

ISSN: 1366-4964

SPECIAL ISSUE

Guest Editors: Baudouin Dupret, Jiří Nekvapil and Ivan Leudar

MEDIA, WARS AND IDENTITIES: BROADCASTING ISLAM, MUSLIMS AND THE MIDDLE EAST Part 1

CONTENTS

Introduction	Baudouin Dupret, Jiří Nekvapil, Ivan Leudar and Jean-Noël Ferrié	1 - 5
Edited Identities and Geopolitics of Global Media	Dušan I. Bjelić	6 - 18
Between Saying and Showing: Making and Contesting Truth Claims in the Media	Lena Jayyusi	19 - 43
The War on Terror and Muslim Britons' Safety: A Week in the Life of a Dialogical Network	Ivan Leudar and Jiří Nekvapil	44 - 62
The Audience They Assign Themselves: Three Arab Channels and Their "Self-Presentation" (al-Jazeera, al-Manar, al-Hurra)	Baudouin Dupret and Jean-Noël Ferrié	63 - 80

Introduction

Baudouin Dupret, Jiří Nekvapil, Ivan Leudar, Jean-Noël Ferrié

This two-part issue of *Ethnographic Studies* brings to you work of a geographically broadly based group of ethnomethodologists. We live and work in places as varied as Prague and Damascus, Manchester and Dubai, Boston and Beirut. All of us are trying to understand violent social conflicts, and in particular the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and Palestine, as well as the 9/11 attacks in New York and 07/07 in London, and, especially but not only, the place that media plays in them. All of us analyse presentations of violent deeds, wars and their protagonists and try to refine the analytic tools available, such as membership categorisation analysis. The broad base of the group is helping us to accomplish a more balanced and refined understanding of the issues involved in these conflicts, particularly by bringing in perspectives from the Middle East.

The wars in Iraq and Palestine and their coverage by Arab channels gave the impression that there was a unanimous opinion supporting the Iraqi and Palestinian “causes” on the ground of its supposedly shared identity. This is not very flattering for “Arabs”: it assumes they get caught in the combined emotions of nationalism and Islamism, and that they cannot evaluate rationally the constraints that bear on them. Worse, it also assumes that democracy is less important for them than identity. As for the broadcasts concerning post-Saddam Hussein Iraq, these give the impression of a versatile population that applauds the tyrant one day, supports the Americans the next day, and which today opposes the occupation and yet descends into a civil war.

It is necessary to deal with these images and to look at the way they are produced and mutually articulated. First, we must

provide some indication of the analytic perspective towards media events that informs the papers in this special issue. This contrasts with the mainstream approach to such events in contemporary social science. According to this view there is an idea of an “Arab” or “Muslim” public space. It is commonly opposed to the concept of the public sphere that is supposedly characteristic of Western modernity. The former would be characterized by the lack of any deliberative capacity and the violent expression of political opposition. This conception starts from the Habermasian concept of ‘public sphere’. It, however, does not provide a sociological tool to describe what actually happens when specific people orient contextually to specific audiences – see Bogen (1999). In our view, however, there is neither an “Arab” nor a “Muslim” public. Rather, there are differentiated public constituencies to which particular people orient, according to circumstances and in specific contexts. This is why a preacher who vilifies the “Americans” or the “Jews” during his Friday sermon does not express the opinion of “Muslims” on the “Americans” or the “Jews”, but addresses what seems to be for him a topic appropriate to circumstances (e.g. the Iraq war) and context (the Friday sermon and its emphatic rhetoric). His discourse can be very different if he is invited to participate in a religious lecture on the television, or moves from one channel to another. It is impossible in sociology to determine which of his discourses is “true”. The question of whether there is a true discourse is in fact irrelevant and is possibly influenced by a Platonic conception of truth as something that is contrary to, and badly reflected in, appearances. Social reality is however

thoroughly mundane (Pollner, 1987), and appearances are real (contrary to Baudrillard's positions; cf. Bjelić, 1999). What people say is indexical to relevant circumstances rather than an expression of circumstance transcending preferences – logically there can be no social position detached from contexts or de-situated language (cf. Zaller, 1995).

What is the advantage of this epistemological position, which is mainly inspired by ethnomethodology and ethnomethodological media studies (e.g. Jalbert, 1999)? It permits us to go beyond the first impression of unanimity and to consider that “Western” and “Arab” or “Muslim” discourses on the wars in Iraq and Palestine are not the expression of monolithic “Muslim” thought, but instead are distinct situated discourses, addressed to precise audiences in specific contexts and to be understood against the background of what “totalized others” (e.g. “Westerners”) are claimed to say and believe. There is therefore a need to bear in mind that discourses orient to audiences and not to one audience; and moreover, that discourses orient to the audience that they construct (Livet, 1994).

During the war in Iraq, discourses were multiple, formally dependent upon the media that were used, and oriented to diverse audiences. Hence, these discourses were not the mere expression of a public space dominated by one single system of representations. References to nationalism and Islam were themselves multiple and contradictory, something that can be characterized as a kind of “solidarity without consensus” (Kertzer, 1988). These discourses presented also some intertextual, i.e. dialogic and polyphonic features (Bakhtin, 1981, 1986) partly captured in the concept of ‘dialogical network’ developed by Ivan Leudar and Jiří Nekvapil (see Leudar, Marsland and Nekvapil, 2004; Leudar and Nekvapil, 2004).

Seeing that discourses are dialogic, polyphonic and oriented to distinct audiences, it seems difficult to consider them as the expression of one and the same identity preoccupation. On the contrary, they reflect different positions and address audiences stipulated by the discourses rather than pre-existing them. Thus, a Cairo taxi driver, for instance, can listen to a preacher calling Muslims to act, read a governmental newspaper criticizing the American breaches of international law, and compliment the Egyptian government for its non-intervention in the conflict. The discourses vary with the context, like the participants’ identities. Identities are, indeed, linked to courses of action and to people’s orientation toward a precise yet virtual audience, which is perceived through a set of categorizations that are taken for granted. The public of a mosque is made of “Muslims”, and the Arab public, of “Arabs”, so that it is the discourse reference that “modalises” identity. Taking into account the dialogic and polyphonic nature of discourses, many identities can be set into motion in one and the same sequence: Islamicity, being an Arab, modernity (in the sense of a discourse grounded on human rights and international law). These identities are contextually relevant according to the discursive performance in which they are embedded (cf. Matosian, 2001: 108). From this point of view, all the declarations of journalists, editorial writers, statesmen, and religious personalities participating in the media use diversified and contextualized identity references that often address a virtual audience and which, for the observer as well as for the speaker, are constituted by the discourse’s orientation and not its reception.

The analytic consequences of the ethnomethodological stance we are taking are clear. We must analyse identity references in the context of speeches rather than take these identities as the source of

speeches (cf. Moerman, 1974). We should not consider identities as expressing global orientations toward questions which themselves are global. An ethnomethodological stance reveals the illusionary character of any 'culturalist' interpretation of conflicts related to the Middle-East and Islam of the kind proposed, for example, by Huntington (1997). It instead points to the close association of the categorization processes, the audiences toward which speeches are oriented, and the media used.

The Western public space must itself be analysed, as it produces a vast amount of discourses on "Arabs" and "Muslims" and is itself the ground for much of "Arab" and "Muslim" discourses that reflexively posit themselves with regard to the Western media. In this regard, the many public spaces are intertwined. They all claim to produce "truth" and "good information" for the sake of the audience they orient towards and according to what the other media broadcast. There is thus a coordinated double-contextualisation: one related to the audience, and the other related to other media.

Instead of closed cultural systems confined within the borders of distinct ideologies, we observe coordinated identity performances accomplished through similar devices, and using equivalent means of categorisation that mirror each other (see Leudar and Nekvapil's contribution to this issue). This is less related to Edward Saïd's idea of a colonial domination extending through the imposition of stereotyped categories, than to what Alfred Schütz (1990) called "reciprocal antagonist perspectives", which occupy limited and changing areas of the daily world. Media's pretence to tell the truth is by no means a media ideology, because it is not the sole product of media and it is not shared at any one moment by everybody. Moreover, it is not a mere artefact, because, as Lena Jayyusi shows in

her contribution to this issue, the mundane attitude is that there is something that "really happened" beyond media pictures. This moral certainty that is ordinarily shared puts an actual limit to the empire of stereotypes.

Contributions to the first part of this two-part issue of *Ethnographic Studies* focus on the practices of public discourse pertinent to conflicts and identities in the Arab and Muslim world. Dušan Bjelić's article considers the discrepancy between "what really happened" and "what we watch". He shows the "editing work", which is itself actual and can be documented, shapes and relates various documents (pictures, movies, etc.) and eventually creates a false reality. He analyses how two pictures of a "raped woman" in the former USSR during WWII, and a "sniper" in the former Yugoslavia, could be identified in contrasting ways and help supporting discourses that were totally contradictory in the ascription of responsibility they made. Lena Jayyusi's article addresses the issue of the formulation and contest of media "truths" concerning the counting of victims during the siege of the city of Fallujah by American troops. She shows how, beyond the discrepancy between "what happened" and "what is given to watch", scenic arrangements as well as editing work always have real bodies as substrates. Such a reality is morally implicative, so that contrasting versions of one and the same event are morally constrained.

Ivan Leudar and Jiří Nekvapil are concerned with the management in the media of identity of Muslim Britons in the days immediately following 9/11. The authors demonstrate concerted efforts by the British Prime Minister Blair and the leading British Muslims to formulate contrastive membership categories to represent British Muslims' and the perpetrators of the attack respectively. The

authors document procedures participants use in talk to create and change membership categories. They analyse a “dialogical network” in which the participants accomplished their task. They show how the protagonists – allies and enemies – interacted in media without directly speaking to each other and acknowledging each other as partners in communication.

Baudouin Dupret and Jean-Noël Ferrié, analyse the “self-presentation” made by three Arab channels, al-Jazeera, al-Manar and al-Hurra. They describe the advertising spots and the websites through which these channels present themselves to their audience and, therefore, the audience that they virtually ascribe to themselves. They show how subjective identities are objectively constructed. They document that these identities are polyphonic, as the spectator of one channel can also be the spectator of another.

The impetus for this special issue of *Ethnographic Studies* came from the international conference of the IIEMCA held in Manchester in 2003. The editors, Baudouin Dupret, Ivan Leudar, and Jiří Nekvapil felt that the ethnomethodological work on conflict, media, and identity needed to be extended in a systematic fashion. This special issue stems from three workshops that ensued. Two of them – “Arabs in the Media: Wars, Identities and Public Space” and “Media, Wars, and Identities” – were held in Damascus, Syria in May 2004 and March 2005, and were supported by the French Middle-East Institute and the Ford Foundation, Cairo office. The third one – “Ethnomethodology and Media: Wars, Borders and Identities” – was held in June 2006 in Prague and supported by Charles University, Prague, Grant Agency of the Czech Republic, Czech Ministry of Education and The French Institute for Social Research, Prague. The Damascus meetings were focused on the Arabs in the Media, the

workshop in Prague extended the themes discussed and included considering the situation and identities of people on the margins of globalized societies, such as Roma, refugees, immigrants and displaced people (such as Palestinians). The special two-part issue of *Ethnographic Studies* contains mainly the contributions to the Damascus workshops.

References

Bakhtin, M., 1981, *The Dialogic Imagination*, Austin: University of Texas.

Bakhtin, M., 1986, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, Austin: University of Texas.

Bjelić, D., 1999, “‘Frenching’ the ‘Real’ and Praxeological Therapy: An Ethnomethodological Clarification of the French Theory of Media”, in P. Jalbert, ed., *Media Studies: Ethnomethodological Approaches*, Lanham: University Press of America, 231-257.

Bogen, D., 1999, *Order Without Rules: Critical Theory and the Logic of Conversation* New York: SUNY Press.

Huntington, S., 1992, *The Clash of Civilizations*, Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute.

Jalbert, P., ed., 1999, *Media Studies: Ethnomethodological Approaches*, Lanham: University Press of America.

Kertzer, D., 1988, *Rituals, Politics and Power*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

Leudar, Marsland, V. and Nekvapil, J., 2004, “On Membership Categorisation: ‘Us’, ‘Them’ and ‘Doing Violence’ in Political Discourse”, *Discourse and Society*, **15**, 243-266.

Leudar, I. and Nekvapil, J., 2004, "Media Dialogical Networks and Political Argumentation", *Journal of Language and Politics*, **3**, 247-266.

Livet, P., 1994, *La communauté virtuelle. Action et communication*, Combas: Editions de l'éclat.

Matoesian, G., 2001, *Law and the Language of Identity : Discourse in the Williams Kennedy Smith Rape Trial*, New-York: Oxford University Press

Moerman, M., 1974, "Accomplishing Ethnicity", in R. Turner, ed., *Ethnomethodology*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.

Pollner, M., 1987, *Mundane Reason: Reality in Everyday and Sociological Discourse*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schütz, A., 1990, *Collected Papers I – The Problem of Social Reality*, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Zaller, J. R., 1992, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Edited Identities and Geopolitics of Global Media

Dušan I. Bjelić

University of Southern Maine, USA

(dbjelic1@maine.rr.com)

In this paper, I will examine the practical logic of the production of identity as situated work of the global media, and I will invite you to look with me at various examples of this work.¹ I suggest that the global media is an industry that produces mass perception as a commodity--in contrast to conventional industries which produce tangible objects. As ethnomethodologists and as Marxists, we should focus on the *production* of mass perception rather than on its *consumption* in order to gain insight into the logic of production of those who manufacture the world as representation. I argue that the media's production of the world as representation has little to do with "objectivity" in the usual sense. Rather, the illusion of "objectivity" is created through the standard practices of producing the world as representation. Here are some actual instances of these practices and the representation they have produced.

In Portland, Maine, local television station WGME, an affiliate of the CBS network, was reporting on the News hour about the danger of adolescents' accessing pornography on the Internet. The TV crew went to a local middle school, ostensibly to report on students' knowledge of computers, and some students were filmed while using the internet in the school's computer lab. When the students watched themselves on TV that night, to their parents', their friends'--and their own--surprise, the news report concerned kids and pornography.

Images of the local students looking at computer screens were followed by images of Internet pornography; television viewers were deliberately led to believe that the students were actually looking at pornographic sites. Clearly, also, reporters had deliberately disguised their real intention in order to gain access to the school and permission to film the students. This fact was not mentioned in the station's disingenuous disclaimer, reported next day in the *Portland Press Herald*, a local newspaper:

"Parents say WGME deceived students in 'Cyber trap' series"

(The children showed off their computer skills, and then saw their faces aired with smut. But the station says its intentions were clear.)

"Sex sells, and our children's faces were used to help promote their series on smut on the Internet." Michael Sweatt, father of student taped by WGME-TV...

A WGME-TV news crew had come to the Lyman Moore Middle School in Portland to tape the seventh-graders as they used computers... (The students) thought the station was producing a story about the computer club and the skills they had learned. They urged their parents and friends to watch the broadcast...

When the series itself aired, it dealt with the sexual aspects of cyberspace, not with how students were learning with computers...

The series has angered many students, parents and officials at Lyman Moore. They say the station misrepresented its intentions and acted unethically...

WGME says it did nothing unethical in the report, which was aired during the February "sweeps"--a period when viewership is monitored and ratings calculated. The

¹ I would like to thank Doug Macbeth and Rosemary Miller for their generous help with this paper.

station attributes the school's reaction to a "perception" problem... (*Portland Press Herald*).

The press report summarized the event as it had happened, leaving the reader to decide whether the actions of the TV station were ethical or not. The two factions involved are the producers of the show, who have 'deceived' the audience as to what they were actually viewing, and the consumers/viewers of the show, some of whom were the original student participants, whose assumptions about the intent of the TV reportage were betrayed. Without getting into the usual debate about the media 'manipulation of reality' we should, for ethnomethodological purposes, focus on the argument of the "bad guys"--the producers of the show--and on the question of precisely how public perception was produced in this case.

I happened to see the TV report and believed that the students were actually looking at porno websites. This seemed to me, at the time, to be a reasonable and realistic assumption, and I did not question the origin of the footage. Other viewers, like me, instructed by the temporal order of images--*this* face followed by *this* site--incorrectly imputed smut-watching to the students shown in the report. Just as Harvey Sacks has convincingly argued that there is nothing inherently dirty in an off-color joke,² we might argue that in this case the smut was not on the screen but a product of the viewers' *instructed* eyes. The production of a punchline, Sacks argues, is structurally tied to the narrative order of the joke itself--and, in our case, to words and images edited in a way that instructs the viewer how to interpret them. And, as Sacks points out, it is this order of speaking, or editing that leads language

from the ordinary and decent assumptions to the obscene. It is the "instructed" eye of the naïve viewer that sees *edited* connections as connections in *real* time between the face of a child and the pornographic website.

It may seem to you that I am setting up an ethnomethodological *apologia* for the media here. This is not the case, and, in my defence, I turn to the practical logic of the ancient Greeks as evidenced by their treatment of a robbery victim. We would blame the robber for a criminal act; the Greeks blamed the robbed, the victim, for not being vigilant enough. To put it ethnomethodologically, the victims have allowed, so to say, a crack in their *Lebenswelt* structure that enables the robber to encroach their personal space. My point is that the victim/robber dyad is analogous to the consumer/global media dyad. And, by being vigilant of the conditions of the production of what is already constructed in media studies as "robbery of reality"³ we can be prepared when the robber arrives.

How, in this culture (US) that appears to embrace the principles of objectivity enshrined in science and technology, can a demonstration of students' computer skills be transformed into an implied obscenity? Clearly, in the example of media chicanery from Portland, Maine, there is a discrepancy between what actually happened and what we see in the representation of it. And as long as theorists of media continue to hold that objective media is possible, such discrepancies will continue to puzzle them. Eric Livingston, referring to literary texts,

² Harvey Sacks, "Some technical considerations of a dirty joke," In: Schenkein, J.N., ed. (1978) *Studies in the organization of conversational interaction*. (New York: Academic Press, 1978), 249-70.

³ See Dusan Bjelic, "Frenching' the 'real' and praxeological therapy: an ethnomethodological clarification of the new French theory of the media "in *Media Studies: Ethnomethodological Approaches*, ed. Paul L. Jalbert, (Lanham, New York, Oxford: University Press of America, International Institute for Ethnomethodology & Conversation Analysis, 1999).

invokes Sacks.⁴ Livingston posits that every text has embedded instructions on how to read it that habitually escape the eye of literary theorists and interpreters. Reading a text without accounting for these instructions is a habitual social practice. Similarly, in the case of the above TV report, the embedded, unaccounted-for instructions to see the news as *if* it were about these kids watching these sites are, in fact, themselves the news. And, we may postulate, these silent instructions to see something *as* “something” have become the referent of the reported event.

Now, with some theoretical background in place, let us again ask how a demonstration of students’ computer skills can be transformed into an implied obscenity. This question begs another larger one: how is it possible to own--and view--a television (in other words, to be an “ordinary” media consumer) without being robbed of one’s own vision and understanding? To answer both these questions, it is necessary to analyze the news taking into account how viewers accomplish seeing it in terms of a report.

The alignment between the content of news and how one is to see it has engendered much debate in social sciences and media studies, all of which, as Wes Sharrock and Wil Coleman astutely observe, focuses on the content of the news and ignores its actual viewing.⁵ Analysis of content is certainly relevant to critical studies of global media, but is it sufficient? Edward Said’s books, *Covering Islam and Orientalism*, critically analyze the content of the news

corrupted by ideology. Briefly summarized, his argument is that ideology is a set of historically constituted rules governing media representation that ensure political domination of the representer over the represented. Representation itself, Said emphasizes, is a subtle form of power and colonization. The US media’s “commitment” to “objectivity,” he maintains, is a relative term when it comes to representing Muslim populations as a “lesser breed.”⁶ The Western media operates on a system of bias against the people of the Middle East, which he calls *orientalism*. Having adopted the anti-Muslim bias of Israel, an important ally of the US in the Middle East, the US media in particular exercises a colonial interest in dominating the Muslim population through representation. Yet despite the history of gross misrepresentation of the Islamic world, Said still does not give up on the possibility of media being objective. A shift in US global politics away from racist policies with regard to Muslims and the Middle East, would, Said expects, be accompanied by a similar shift away from anti-Muslim bias in the media. Said assumes that inclusive politics will produce objective representation of the “other”. While sharing his political concerns and agreeing with his principles of inclusive politics, we question his assumption that the media as an industry of mass perception can ever embrace objectivity as its identifying professional drill.⁷

⁶ Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (New York : Pantheon Books, 1978). See also, *Edward Said: On Orientalism*, documentary by Sut Jhally, MEF, 1998.

⁷ I am not suggesting that journalism should be irresponsible, however, being responsible is still not a domain of objectivity as an exclusive domain of epistemology but individual and professional ethics and institutional moral codes. “Objective” journalism, that is responsible and fair, belongs to ethics and morality, not epistemology. Said seems to fuse the two as if fair journalism is the same as being objective. On the use of journalistic “objectivity” in covering Arab-Israeli conflict as

⁴ Eric Livingston, *An Anthropology of Reading*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1994).

⁵ Wes Sharrock and Wil Coleman, “Seeking and Finding Society in the Text,” in *Media Studies: Ethnomethodological Approaches*, ed. Paul L. Jalbert, (Lanham, New York, Oxford: University Press of America, International Institute for Ethnomethodology & Conversation Analysis, 1999).

Producing history with stills

In order to produce a coherent report--whether documenting a family reunion or a battlefield, regardless of aesthetic or ideological motivation for the representation--the camera must find a single focus amid the emerging social order. There are praxeological fundamentals of natural perception that must be observed--such as a camera shot that precedes, and makes possible the ideology to be ascribed in it in the global media. In order for the camera shot to acquire an ideological reading, it must be selectively situated in the world it represents. And here is the first praxiom (practical axiom) that we must elucidate: *the camera can't miss the world*. Consider this, when I give my students an assignment to take a video-camera to the street and find *something* for the class in 5 minutes, they normally return with shots of people walking or crossing the street, cars passing or stopping at the red light, etc. In other words, they have recorded the *familiar* world. Without this co-produced familiarity between the people on the street and the student the representation becomes impossible. Now, let us say, in a news report, the way is carefully prepared for images to be interpreted in a certain way by the viewer as if recognizing familiarity. It is the role of stereotypes, clichés, standardized images, sound bites etc., all of which are technical devices, to make the unfamiliar world familiar.

Douglas Macbeth, in his essay, *Glances, Trances, and Their Relevance for a Visual Sociology*,⁸ provides a striking example of

this in his analysis of the production of *Ax Fight* (1975)⁹, an ethnographic film that documents a fight in a Yanomamo village. "Following an introductory text laid over a map, and a strip of audio-only record to the effect of 'Bring your camera over here; it's gonna start,' the footage begins in the midst of a search,"¹⁰ is how Macbeth describes the beginning of the film, thus providing an example of situated prophecy and its ushering of the camera into the field of social discovery. He proceeds to show how, in finding its focus, the camera gaze sails along the anticipatory structures of the event: "There is evidently 'something' going on... in the witnessable sense that Asch, as viewfinder, and we as viewers of his record, are in the midst of a motivated search, without knowing what could be promised for it, or where."¹¹ The camera finds and records what it is seeking: the fight. And, Macbeth writes, "Not only the fight, but the work of [the producer's] search is preserved in a record that shows his inquiry perhaps more clearly than the world it finds."¹²

Ax Fight is a path-breaking film in the annals of visual anthropology. It is also, Macbeth argues, a document about finding "something" in an order of social practice, that for ethnomethodology is a discoverable work of situated seeing-with-a-camera. Macbeth's analysis demonstrates how the 'camera work' produces and accounts for the production of its record of social order *in situ*. Events are recorded *as of* the camera's sustained audio-visual inquiry. Macbeth's analysis of praxeological fundamentals of visual representation is a description of the real time production of a visual document.

journalistic fairness see Paul Jalbert, "'News Speak' about the Lebanon War," in *Journal of Palestine Studies, A Quarterly on Palestinian Affairs and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, Vol. XIV, No. 1, Fall 1984, Issue 53: 33.

⁸ Douglas Macbeth, "Glances, Trances, and Their Relevance for a Visual Sociology," in *Media Studies: Ethnomethodological Approaches*, ed. Paul L. Jalbert, (Lanham, New York, Oxford: University Press of America, International Institute for

Ethnomethodology & Conversation Analysis, 1999).

⁹ The producers of this film are two anthropologists Tim Ash and Napoleon Chagnon.

¹⁰ Macbeth, "Glances," 152-53.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 154.

¹² *Ibid.*, 155.

In the course of his inquiry, Macbeth elucidates another visual praxiom: *one must look somewhere*. He suggests that in the unfamiliar world one has to choose *where* to look as if looking through the camera in order to find *something* as a familiar thing. Following this praxiom, the camera selects a shot in *Ax Fight*. Directed to the subject of the anthropological inquiry: ‘Look for the fight!’ as if saying, ‘This is why we came here!’, the anthropologically trained camera is instrumental in resolving the practical dilemma of “Where to look?” In this way the camera shot is able to clearly document a world unfamiliar to the two anthropologists, who have in turn succeeded in making a film understandable to all of us who have never put a foot in that village. Although the fundamentals of natural perception must be satisfied, the camera allows for its further re-contextualization. Like Husserl’s Galileo, the camera is a genius at discovering--and instantly concealing--the social world.

But when an image is stripped of its local context of production and re-contextualized in a studio and editing room, it then is subject to a quite different set of practices geared towards the re-production of the conditions of its production. Knowing when the fight will start is the situated anthropological theory of a skilled camera gaze, but its eventual meaning will be decided at the editing table according to rules external to this intuitive practice. Even *Ax Fight*, with its meticulous, situated camera work, has been criticized for the interpolation of “...a lineage chart and a formal analysis of kinship for ‘explaining’ the fight” in the finished work.¹³ Inserted expert knowledge has put the final touch on the meaning of the shot. This is the moment when, figuratively, a Yanomamo villager enters the studio and becomes an educated signifier.

¹³ Ibid., 169n.

With re-contextualization and de-temporalization of an image, the media setting begins its now-familiar practice of conforming context and time to the purpose of a report. In journalism a photo is paradoxically regarded as a document of the natural conditions of a subject and his or her settings. Yet the “natural conditions” of an image of a subject obtain *only* in the context of its local production, and media routinely must distort or completely disguise these natural conditions in order to assign the desired standardized meaning to the image.¹⁴ For example, in the case of the report on teenagers and pornographic websites, the raw footage would have simply shown students exhibiting their computer skills. By re-processing the sequential order of (re)presentation, other exhibits are achieved. It seems that one picture is indeed “worth a thousand words,” especially if it is recontextualized.

However, in the new reality of global-digital media, one picture does not *equal* the representational power of a thousand words, but is more likely to be reduced to the meaning assigned by the words

¹⁴ That there can be many familiar meanings for an image has been decisively shown in an experiment performed by the Soviet film theorist Lev Kuleshov (*Kuleshov on Film: Writings of Lev Kuleshov*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974). In the early 1920s, he devised a series of experiments around variously edited, disjointed shots aiming to demonstrate that the content of a single shot can be emotionally enriched, and the character and the intensity of the emotions modified by means of editing. Kuleshov’s findings prompted another Soviet film theorist and filmmaker, Sergei Eisenstein, to declare that editing “has become the indisputable axiom on which the worldwide culture of the cinema has been built.” (Sergei Eisenstein, *Film Form and Film Sense*, Cleveland: Merieian, 1957, 257.) Applied to our material, each meaning of kids using computers, once as a demonstration of their skills, another time as accessing forbidden websites, are equally real. For more about the sociological significance of the theory of montage, see Lena Jayyusi’s seminal paper “Toward a sociology of the film text,” in *Semiotica*, 68 (3/4): 271-296.

accompanying it. Due to its own technological potential to mean many things, photography may take quite a different semiotic trajectory in actual use, depending on the purpose of the message. "Pictures have no tenses," declared early film theorist Bela Balazs, explaining film as a new mechanical art based on techniques of montage, or editing. "A smile is a smile, even if seen in an isolated shot, but what this smile refers to, what invoked it, what is its effect and dramatic signification-all this can emerge only from the preceding and following shots."¹⁵ What we perceive in everyday life, through the flow of inner time, as connected images of moving objects and people, is reconstructed in film through montage, a technique of ordering images and words in such a way as to create a desired meaning.¹⁶ Although a tremendous resource for creative expression, Balazs warns that film "... montage can not only produce poetry-it can also fake and falsify things more completely than any other human means of expression."¹⁷ Balazs did not anticipate that the entire industry of mass perception would soon leverage this very possibility in its own development. This successful use of studio editing logic to represent daily and distant events in the media owes much to the techniques of montage developed by the motion picture industry.

By definition, then, media image entails a re-conceptualization of its local production. And intrinsic to each image by virtue of its very lack of "tenses", is the ability to account for its own re-contextualization, or--so to speak--its falsification. To the extent that the use of an image accounts for the conditions of its

production of falsification, falsification may *also* be the way to de-falsify, *if* it can be accounted for. Let us elucidate some rules of this "falsification" in considering a specific example of the use of photography in *Time* magazine as part of a report on mass rape in the war in Bosnia. I will show here how, through instructive editing, a particular photograph may be made to seem illustrative of more than one set of facts.

Photo # 1



(This photo was a part of an article [*Time*, Feb., 22, 1993])

Looking at this photo, I naturally assumed that this woman was "raped by Ukrainians in Lvov, Poland, in 1945," just as I assumed that the students in Portland, Maine, were actually looking at pornographic websites. But, in the next issue of *Time*, the photo was displayed again, now in the section "letters to the editor." Under the title "Wartime Atrocities" there was an editorial response to readers' letters about the photo:

More than 750 readers have written us so far about the photograph of the young

¹⁵ Bela Balazs, *Theory of the Film. Character and Growth of a New Art*. Translated from Hungarian Edith Bone, (New York: Dover Publication Inc., 1970), 118.

¹⁶ See also Lena Jayyusi, "Toward a socio-logic of the film text," in *Semiotica*, 68 (3/4): 271-296.

¹⁷ Balazs, *Ibid.*, 119.

woman that accompanied our story on rape and the war in Bosnia. We used this picture to illustrate the longtime use of rape as a weapon in warfare. The picture's caption, which said it showed a "Jewish girl raped by Ukrainians in Lvov, Poland, in 1945," struck a nerve with readers of Ukrainian descent, who felt it unfairly, singled out Ukrainians for committing acts of rape during World War II. These readers also questioned how we knew the victim was Jewish. Except for the date, the information describing the photo was obtained from an employee of a Holocaust museum in Israel. Subsequent research into the picture's somewhat murky past has turned up the following:

The photo was taken not in 1945 but in 1941 in Lvov (its Russian name), or Lviv (its name today), Ukraine, shortly after the Germans captured the city from the Soviets on June 30. Chaos in the form of pogroms, rapes and killings swept the town at that time. The picture is one of a series showing women being stripped, harassed and chased by civilians. One school of thought holds that the women were Jewish victims of the pogroms in Lvov. The Germans spread rumors that Jews were responsible for the murders of several thousand political prisoners found in the cellars of Soviet NKVD buildings, thus fueling the hatred and the acts of revenge against local Jews that followed. Other historians insist that the majority of the women pictured in the series of photographs were mistresses the Soviets abandoned when they fled Lvov to escape the German troops. The defenseless collaborators were then attacked by resentful residents for consorting with the Soviet enemy. Still another theory suggests the occupying Nazis orchestrated the public humiliation of the women in order to shoot an anti-Semitic propaganda film.

Despite our best efforts, we have not been able to pin down exactly what situation the photograph portrays. But there is enough confusion about it for us to regret that our caption, in addition to misdating the picture, may well have conveyed a false impression. (April 19)

This case of editing is especially revealing. Bear in mind, *Time* is an elite publication within corporate media that should set a standard of professional reporting for the rest of the world. And yet, one would conclude from the editorial, *Time* is no better than the local WGME TV station. But there is a difference between them: *Time* acknowledges its error (a sign of professionalism, I suppose), while the Portland TV station disclaims any responsibility for its viewers' perception of reality. Under public pressure, mostly by Ukrainians, *Time* acknowledges that the photo's caption is not only misleading, it is incorrect, and this acknowledgment preserves the *possibility* of the photograph's referentiality. Now, all those who were not offended by the reference to Ukrainians presumably accepted the caption as written because they had no reason not to. But a single epistemological question by a commonsensical reader, "How do you know what this photo is?" shatters the veneer of historic "fact," revealing that for the editor, if not for the reader, this photo represents only a generic *illustration* of women being raped in war, not a particular woman being raped in a particular war but of "Jewish woman" as historical cliché. We learn from the editor that the subsequent investigation into the history of the photo has revealed the picture's "murky past" and that it is far from clear what the photo's actual subject is. "There is more than one school of thought," the editor informs us.

Confronted suddenly by the uncertain provenance of the photo, *Time* is forced to take, so to say, a "post-structuralist" position on its own data, acknowledging it as discursive and historically unstable. "Despite our best efforts" (and here come the professional ethics of corporate journalism), "we have not been able to pin down exactly what situation the photograph portrays. But there is enough confusion about it for us to regret that our caption, in addition to misdating the

picture, may well have conveyed a false impression.” *Time* did not *intend* to give wrong information, but it *acknowledges* that readers may have been misled into interpreting the photo a certain way. In other words, the editor wants us to understand that s/he did not want the photo to be taken *literally* as portraying a “Jewish woman raped in Lvov,” but only as a general illustration of rape in war, the subject matter of the accompanying text.

Time magazine is not the only publication that has used this photo as an illustration rather than as documentation of a specific event and an identity. Others are *WWII Time-Life Books History of the Second World War* (1989) on page 141 (photo # 2) and the other is *Life World War II* (1990) page 111 (photo # 3), but with different captions.

The photograph is used in the 1989 volume (photo #2) as the opening image of the book and is meant to convey the horror and violence of World War II. The caption reads: “A rape victim in the city of Lvov cries out in rage and anguish as an older woman comforts her. Anti-Semitic citizens rounded up 1,000 Jews and turned them over to the Germans.” The caption purports to authenticate the photograph by invoking a specific historical event connected with Ukrainian anti-Semitism. But, as we know from the disclaimer issued by *Time* magazine in 1993, there is no proof that this is what the photo actually documents. Photo #3 is framed by a narrative about the German invasion of the USSR and another photo of hanging bodies--Russians hung by the SS. The title of the chapter is “1941 Rape of Russia.” The woman in photo #3, in this incarnation, may have been a Russian or Ukrainian woman raped presumably by the occupiers, the Germans--but not necessarily; she may have been raped also by the locals. While *Time* magazine is a commercial publication, the two books in which the photo appears are history books;

Photo # 2



Photo # 3



they claim authority over facts and yet the facts are contradictory. What is common to all three sources is the use of photography to create itself as a document of an actual event and an actual person. Photography is

here more as a *performative* fact than a given fact.¹⁸

The editor's "best effort" to discover the true subject of the photo has resulted in the revelation of its "murky past." Thus the editor of *Time* accounts for the use of the photo to manufacture mass perception. The way it has been used, the editor acknowledges, may have created confusion and may have misled the reader about the identity of the woman and what happened to her. The subsequent apology immediately negates this self-account, somehow managing to suggest that this was an aberrational episode and not endemic to the system itself.

Producing identities with edited images

Let us now examine TV images and their re-contextualization as the basis for production of a report. ABC's "Prime Time Live" with Diane Sawyer--a show that combines studio and field coverage of the world's current events--ran a segment on snipers in Sarajevo during the city's siege. This topic was selected that evening in part because the ABC producer (for the

same show), David Kaplan, was shot in Sarajevo on August 13, 1992, and became the subject of many news reports. "Kaplan, a producer for ABC News, was shot and killed by a sniper as he was riding in a car that was part of a convoy taking Serbian premier Milan Panic from Sarajevo airport to United Nations headquarters along a road known as 'Sniper Alley.' The bullet entered the car between the letters 'T' and 'V' taped on its side."¹⁹

Video # 1



...so now already an estimate that 10,000 people have been killed, many of them killed by snipers who seemed to care nothing about the target: children and civilians. The prime minister, Milan Panic, claims that recently, snipers have been offered \$500 for killing a journalist. What you are about to see is an excerpt from a French documentary on snipers narrated by John Kinonas, a highly unusual glimpse of these anonymous assassins.



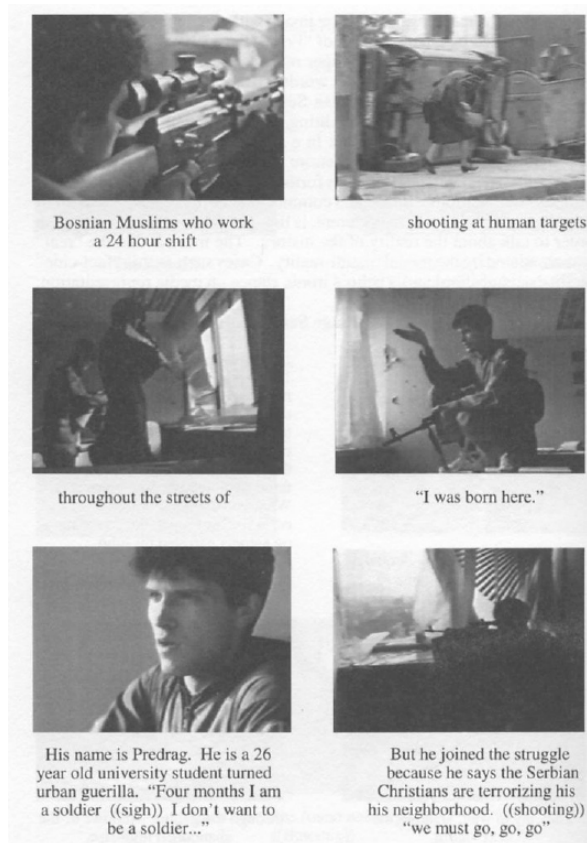
They lay in wait, stalking the next victim



through the gaping windows of the abandoned high-rise,

¹⁸ Recall here Michelangelo Antonioni's now-classic film from the 1960's, "Blow Up," and its story about a photographer discovering the image of a dead body in photos developed in his lab. He is at pains to find the truth by means of editing images. "What really happened" is the specific, or shall I say, the final arrangement of images, which reconstitute, via the lab work, the real time of the homicide. The film makes an existential drama out of this practical situation of a photo lab; a discrepancy between the visual proof of the body and the absence of the body outside the photo-story, is the result only of the lab work, of the production and interpretation of images. In that respect this film is not really about an existential crisis, but rather about the increasing significance of photo-labs in our lives. Even the highest levels of political authority and institutions such as the State Department and the CIA do not shy away from using photo-lab work. Colin Powell's presentation to the UN Security Council of, shall I remind you, the irrefutable "evidence" about Iraqi weapons of mass destruction is a dramatic case of the use of images to manipulate US foreign policy.

¹⁹ <http://www.radiobs.net/mediaslender/archives/001045print.php>



Sawyer introduces the segment from the studio, stating that many of the 10,000 civilians already killed in the siege of Sarajevo have been shot by snipers. The president of Serbia, Milan Panic, whose visit to Sarajevo was to be covered by Kaplan, has told ABC that snipers are getting \$ 500 for shooting a journalist. This information, added to the already existing horror of sniping in the midst of war, sets the framework for interpreting sniping in Sarajevo as a particularly horrendous practice--yet with a 'human face.' To illustrate this, Sawyer introduces a sequence from a French documentary about these "anonymous assassins," which will be narrated by John Kinonas.

"They lie in wait, stalking the next victim"--John Kinonas' voice synchronizes with the close-up image of someone's finger on the trigger. The feeling is eerie. The next image shows the city as seen through the eye of a sniper, "... through the gaping windows of abandoned high-rise, ...", within which the sniper selects

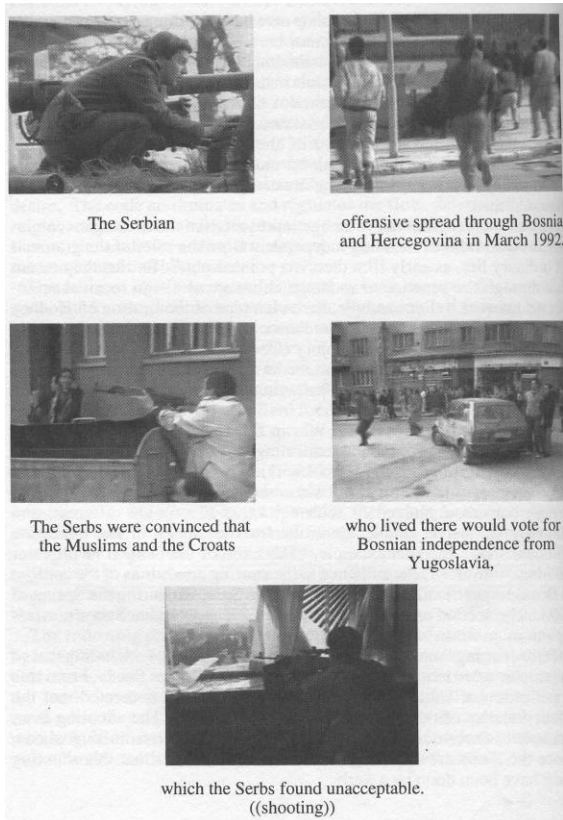
civilian targets. After this short introduction into the unique perspective of sniping activity, the report immediately establishes the ethnic identity of the sniper; he is Bosnian Muslim, working a "24-hour shift...". The next image connects sniping with a specific target: an older woman running for cover behind some garbage containers (yet she is exposed to this sniper from the supposedly safe side in the ethnically divided city). In the next image we see that there are in fact two snipers; while one is shooting, the other is reloading. The "Muslim" sniper then squats behind the window and talks to the cameraman while pointing to the streets where he selects his targets, "I was born here ..." he says in broken English." His name is "Predrag," he is 26 years old and a university student. He states that he has been doing this for four months and does not wish to do it any longer. But, in the next image, he fires and immediately runs away from the window urging the cameraman to do the same.

Let us now compare this sniper sequence from "Prime Time Live" with a segment aired by ABC seven months later in which the same sniper appears again, not as a "Muslim" but as a "Serb." That show is called "Land of the Demons" (ABC, March 1993) and is narrated by Peter Jennings. It is a special report exploring why the international community has done nothing to stop the war. The show contains interviews and appearances by many politicians and some military figures. The video sequence, which I here analyze, forms part of a larger story and features the same images of the sniper from Sarajevo as does the earlier "Prime Time Live" show. The larger context of this particular incarnation of the sniper images is the "troubled land of multiethnic Yugoslavia" and the longstanding ethnic hatred between the Catholic Croats and the Orthodox Serbs. This hate, the story conveys, culminated in the Second World War; after the war it was suppressed by Tito's regime

while maintaining an ethnic balance of power, but when Tito died it flared up again. As a result, the republics of the Former Yugoslavia--Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia--decided to secede from Yugoslavia, which the Serbs violently opposed. The segment analyzed here purports to document events that took place when conflict between the Serbs and Croats spilled into neighboring Bosnia in the spring of 1992.

The first image of a uniformed man squatting next to a firing cannon is synchronized with narration that begins with the words, "The Serbian offensive...". This establishes the topic of the sentence as well as the identity of the uniformed man as an ethnic Serb. How do we know that he is Serb? The context introduced prior to this image, Serbian aggression on Bosnia and Herzegovina, defines the activity of firing the cannon as an example of this aggression.

Video # 2



In other words, we are led to see this image not as a military exercise, for example, but as firing in an actual conflict. "The Serbian offensive...", this ethnically specific description of an action has been divided into two connected images. The "...offensive" part comes with the following image of urban public disorder--presumably Sarajevo's--caused by the Serbian attack, including the firing cannon. The firing of a cannon and the people on the street running for cover connect the two images in time and space and suggest that this actual firing--or firing such as this-- is causing urban disorder and panic. Splicing two images unrelated in real time to connect "The Serbian" with "offensive" not only connects these two images--firing and taking cover from it--but also establishes retroactively an offensive, rather than a defensive, purpose for the shooting cannon. Because the image of civilians taking cover immediately follows that of the firing of the cannon, it is established by this order of editing images and words that the civilian activities are those of non-Serb victims.

The third image of a civilian man firing from behind a trash container while two other civilians take cover is synchronized with a new sentence in the narration: "The Serbs were convinced that Muslims and the Croats...". Unlike the narration accompanying the first image, in which "The Serbian" establishes the ethnic identity of the uniformed man firing a cannon, in this image "The Serbs" defines the activity of shooting as being carried out by a Bosnian Muslim or a Bosnian Croat. Since the relation of the attack to the victims has been established in the previous two images, the third image shows a civilian man surrounded by other civilians, standing next to the trash container and firing from the gun at the "attacker"; he is in the city and is a civilian; he is defending his city as well as other city dwellers. Such a categorization suggests a defensive form of shooting in

relation to the firing cannon as well as in relation to the image of civilians running for a cover. The position of his gun, shooting from right to left is opposite to the cannon's, from left to right, thus suggesting this must be a defensive response to the cannon's attack. Once again, his ethnic identity must be non-Serb since it corresponds to the defensive activity constructed as Muslim or Croat. The fourth image displays civilians observing a distant shooting activity still related to the Bosnian independence from Yugoslavia. "... who lived there would vote for Bosnian independence from Yugoslavia..." runs the narration in this scene. Shooting on these people and the place where these people live because they want to determine their own sovereignty, is by definition an act of unjustifiable aggression.

The fifth image is central to this analysis of how identity and image are organized, and produced. When Jennings' words, "... Which the Serbs found unacceptable," accompany the image of a sniper, they assign a Serb ethnic identity to the image. The sniping at civilians is, one infers from the context of the story, a way of punishing them for their wish for independence. Serbs are those who did not want to accept the will of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina to become an independent country; they are stopping it by means of force--cannons and snipers.

Some concluding remarks on the question of "objectivity" in media

Both TV reports raise interesting theoretical questions, which have in fact a very practical origin. On a general level of meaning, the narration of the reports appears to be the narration of real things happening "over there," which means that images coming from "over there," are the narration's referent. But a close look reveals that the images (sniper) are only an illustration of the narration (the Serb, the

Muslim). ABC reserves the right to be specific or only allusive depending on the purpose or resources of the report. In the second video, ABC only implies, through editing words and the image of the sniper, that he is "Serb." However, in the first video, aired seven months before, the image is specifically that of a "Bosnian Muslim." For those who have no memory of the first image, he may be the Serb sniper. Or, we may say, it does not really matter because the Muslim sniper may be illustrating sniping *per se* as an activity done in *reality* by the Serbs. For that evening's news dedicated to the Serb aggression on Bosnia, the image instructs identity that is consistent with the story about Serb aggression on Bosnian civilians, not the actual body of the sniper. And to further destabilize the identity of the sniper we should also note that in the first video the sniper does not identify himself either as "Muslim" or as "Predrag." The narrator does it, so we don't know for sure the sniper's true ethnic identity. He may in fact be a Serb.

We can understand the practical advantages, in editing for the media industry, of re-using video material in different contexts. But this practice does bring into question the validity of the news as a report from reality. Holding 'reality' aside, it lends insight into how the media sets their images to work. The narration is supposed to identify the image and *vice versa*. Under my photo on my driver's license is my name. The order of photo and words constitutes a document for establishing the reality of my identity along the presence of my body. From the standpoint of the principles of objectivity, if I were to place a picture of my son above my name and then attempt to explain that he *illustrates* me, that he looks *enough* like me, as well, that would be fraudulent, given the fact of my body as the referent for the words and image. That is the nature of that kind of document that must have a specific body as its referent as the assumed

relation of objectivity (yet, as we all know, even that can be forged). But in the absence of the body the referent becomes the *story about* the body. In terms of structural linguistics, this could be expressed as follows: the image of the sniper in the ABC report is (to be) referent to the narrative, showing us the actual person who is its subject. But it is also true that the narration is here (to be) referent to the image. Yet at close inspection this is not the case. The relation between the sniper and the Serb/Muslim is only a temporal coincidence designed by the editor not to tell us what really happened in that distant world, or who the sniper really is, but what has happened at the editing table to make the incident appear to be an event in the world. In other words, neither image nor narration has the status of a “true” referent. They are cut in such a way that words work as an illustration of images and images as illustration of words. Nowhere is the referent found. This seems to be a condition of so-called media “objective” reporting, meaning that the report is nothing other than *an illustration of an illustration* thus never about the actual identity or event. It is a pure product of editing practices. The only stable thing here seems to be the corporate logo of the network.

Let us on this point conclude that the remarkable fluidity of the member’s gaze in the world of visual technology and geopolitical interests is a resource not only for elucidating social order but also for the production of mass perception about and of social order. Furthermore, we have recognized the unavoidable reality-disjunction in media representation and have shown that use of stereotypes brings visual stability into the politically unstable world. And we have suggested the impossibility of “objectivity” in media, if by that term we mean stereotype-free representation. A ‘stereotype’ is a standardized meaning, and there seem to be too many of those for media production

to foreswear. While politically and ethically undesirable, representational stereotypes--of Muslims, Jews, or Serbs--are seen here as practical achievements of editing. They perform an enormously practical function in stabilizing the fluid gaze in an amorphous world and in facilitating the production and reproduction of the media industry itself as the instrument of global *communication*.²⁰ This brings us back to Said’s faith in the objectivity of media. As we have seen, the US mass media lacks objectivity (i.e. stereotype-free representation) not only towards Muslims but also towards its own white Christian and Jewish kids using computers. We can say objectivity is no longer afforded. If objectivity means seeing events on the screen in the same way they are seen by those who have produced those events, the objectivity of media representation will always remain an impossible ideal. The basic challenge to Said’s assumption lies in the irremediable disjunction between the rules of producing events and the rules of producing the seeing of their representation. The only place for objectivity in this context is in accounting for its absence.

²⁰ Perhaps this explains why the shift of the sniper’s identity did not hurt the corporate standing of ABC news; to the contrary, it produced and reproduced the coherence of the ABC news both evenings, maintained not by the logic of the reported events but by editing logic and style.

Between Saying and Showing: Making and Contesting Truth Claims in the Media

Lena Jayyusi

Cheikh Zayed University, Dubai, U.A.E.
(lena.jayyusi@gmail.com)

The death of civilians is a morally accountable matter. Already, in talking of 'civilians' (or in the identification of a population as a group of 'civilians'), there is an embedded contrast with 'non-civilians' which may in situ implicate a number of possible further categories: 'combatants', 'soldiers', 'the military', 'terrorists' etc. In other words, two discourse frames – 'war/violence' and 'ordinary life' – are *simultaneously* involved. In this mapping, a variety of trajectories for the categorization and location of persons in this environment become available as morally implicative matters. 'Death' is always significant, in any language, any culture, and any population. It may be mitigated, justified, excused, and attached differentially to various categories of person, settings, and contingencies, but it can never *generically* be ignored. It is always accountable. When attached to specific populations/categories in particular sorts of circumstances it can, in occasioned ways, be dismissed, but such 'dismissal' is *accomplished*, and the modes and methods by which it is so accomplished (or which otherwise ground a justification or excuse for the deaths) may remain *themselves* irremediably accountable in various ways by different parties. Such accountability and accounting cannot be absolutely foreclosed, and may in some other location or time be pressed, pursued and made relevant by the same or other agents.²¹

²¹ This applies to 'death', 'killing' and various other injuries that may be inflicted. A recent example indicative of a trend to organize concerted action so as formally, publicly and retroactively to reconstitute past actions by different state officials as morally and legally accountable is that of Major General Doron Almog, head of Israeli forces in Gaza during the second Palestinian Intifada. He had

It is this moral environment, and this kind of moral complex, which had (and still has) to be traversed and negotiated in the war on Iraq, as indeed during and after any war, at least in modern times.²² And it is precisely these sorts of issues which formed both the substance, point, and frame of media reporting on the Iraq war of 2003, as well as the substance of the critical contestations made, both about the war, *and* about its reporting and accounting; the media coverage of the war, as well as the reports, accounts and descriptions given by various parties, official or otherwise.

an arrest warrant issued against him by a Bow Street magistrates court in central London for suspected violations of the 4th Geneva Conventions which was meant to be served on his arrival at Heathrow on September 11, 2005. Almog evaded arrest, on being tipped off before disembarking from the El Al plane, by flying right back to Tel Aviv. He was reported to have said that "any Israeli officer could now be arrested in Britain simply for having performed their duty". See *The Guardian* report on this, September 12, 2005. See also the Amnesty International posting on this at (<http://www.amnesty.org.uk/news/press/16427.shtml>, consulted September 22, 2005).

²² The fact that different distinctions and valuations of 'deaths' and 'dying', and applications of these, operated in other places and/or previous ages (from antiquity to the present) does not diminish the point. That death may have been 'heroic' or 'justified', 'sacrificial' or 'holy', or as attached to *specified* populations, simply permissible without thought, demonstrates precisely that it has never been generically dismissible: rather it was (and still is in particular ways) *the liminal mode by which distinctions and boundaries are established between categories of person and/or population*. Giorgio Agamben's (1998) important politico-philosophical work is of special relevance here. It would be of interest to attempt a history of (the conditions of possibility for) the emergence of new forms and grids of valuation that have been attached to 'life' and 'death'.

This paper will address the truth claims made and pursued about both the *identity* and the *numbers of deaths* in the context of particular 'moments' of that war, a matter that had every relationship to the possible characterization of the war itself, and those who declared and waged it. The paper addresses this through the claims made both *by* media reports, and *about* them, as the actual 'facts', 'truths', and 'outcomes' of the war and its conduct were (indeed still are) fiercely debated. In the process, a number of issues relating to intelligibility, visibility and the moral order will be raised.

Media Accounts and Media Accountability: The Practical Representation Problem

In the practical world, members historicize 'events' as a matter of routine accounting; they contextualize them both spatially and temporally: they can invoke, assume and orient to 'networks' of actions, persons, and events; they can situate them in temporally located and unfolding dynamics, i.e. they temporalize and spatialize them (constitute them relationally) and further, in so doing, they can make 'change' and 'transformability' accountable. These are routine features of the ways members orient to events in their own and other people's everyday lives, and of the ways they may engage them. Yet, despite their unrelievedly spatio-temporal contextualisations, they nevertheless orient to the in-principle recalcitrant facticity and objectivity of events and circumstances. In this, they orient to the *in-principle* discoverable truth-value of accounts and claims, as well as to the facticity and 'reality' of the *actual* courses of events in the world and their outcomes. The relationship between claims (words and utterances) and the world/events is one which is, in principle, irremediably subject to member's scrutiny, further claims and counter-claims, and even inquiry. It is within the context of such mundane features that are unrelievedly constitutive of reasoning about the world, and of the

practices of accounting for events within it, that one needs to understand the contexture of media accounts.

Media accounts are specific sorts of practico-epistemic objects. They constitute texts produced *from within* the socio-logic and practical organization of an institutionally organized array of everyday activities, but an array, nevertheless, which partakes of mundane common sense practices of accounting, telling, describing, inferring, and claiming, as well as asking questions, giving evidence (for better or for worse), condemning, making allegations, passing on information, and interviewing. That is to say, they are embedded, for their sense and reference, and for the way they 'work', in the features and the logic of everyday practical reasoning. Yet, at the same time, like other social practices, they have a logic which is specific to them, a logic constituted by the particular modes within which they organize various cultural practices, and deploy them. They partake, in other words, of the practico-moral logic of reasoning and praxis within the world, but do so in modes that specifically constitute them *as the institutional and institutionalized practices* they are.²³

In 'reading' a media account we are instructed, *through the account*, in the ways we are to understand, see and know *other* places, *particular* events and their rubric, as well as persons and histories. In this we are implicitly also 'instructed' to orient to media texts, as reports on an objective world, and moreover, objective or accurate reports on such a world. Two presumptions are built into the report's intelligibility and readability. One is that there is an objective world to be known, understood and described: this is indeed a

²³ See here, for example, the work of Gaye Tuchman (1978) in which she explores professional media routines and methods of news gathering and reporting, and the ways these are embedded in institutional arrangements and procedures. Beyond that, for examples of ethnomethodological studies of media and media work, see Jalbert (1999).

very premise of living-in-the world, of everyday social interaction and practical intelligibility, a premise that can brook no absolute negation or systematic ambiguity in the mundane conduct of social life. The other one is that the report renders this *factively* rather than *fictively*. No one offers an account of some event *as a false* one, although sometimes it can be offered *as an uncertain* account, but for this to be the case, particular hedging devices are used; qualifications and qualifiers. Embedded, that is, within the rhetoric of 'objectivity' of a news account, and of news reporting (at its supposed ideal best), *is the potential collapse of the notion of the objectivity of the world into the notion of the objectivity of the account of the world*. Of course there are editorials, opinion pieces, and other genres of media textual practice, but these genres, in their very deployment and self-announcement, constitute reports as being other, and indeed instruct us to see them in a different light. This brings to mind Habermas's "validity claims"(1976), in particular the two validity claims of 'truth' and 'sincerity'. These are principles that are implicitly taken as informing communicative action (in what he calls the "ideal speech situation"): that in the very telling of an account, there is, at least at that moment, an implicit (even if defeasible) claim that it tells the event, for the practical purposes at hand, "as it happened", and that it is so told in good faith.²⁴ Without analytically endorsing the use of the notion of the 'ideal speech situation' here, one can nevertheless concur with him that in the very communicative

act, these validity claims are taken by interlocutors as being implicit.²⁵

But here one of the specific features of media accounts surfaces: once they are released into the flow of everyday transactions, they seemingly stand *disembodied and disembedded* from their points of production, as well as the courses of production which gave rise to them, the immediate contexts of use, *and* the practical tasks of account recipients. In this they are unlike courtroom accounts, reports to a family member, institutional reports, or other reports people tell each other *in* the course of interaction.²⁶ It is this feature which is specific and peculiar to media accounts as social and discursive objects. They can then take on the features of self-contained, disinterested, docile, 'documents' and routinely are so treated by members/researchers. Indeed they are treatable as documents which provide possible documentary indices of various sorts, deployable across a set of different logico-practical registers, indices of various social 'objects', 'phenomena' or 'facts' which may be differentially and even disjunctively treated and used by members. One may, on the one hand, examine a media account for the kind of social world which it is both an index of, and 'narrates', so to speak, and one can trace *within it* the map of social structures, and the character of actions, agents and events which seem to constitute the world it speaks of, *and* the 'world it speaks'. And one may, on the other hand, simply *read off* the events and facts from the account as given (market prices; government decrees; dates of events; etc.).

But in fact, all claims made, and readabilities thus produced, are routinely held up for inspection, comment, accountability and inquiry by ordinary

²⁴ The notion of 'for all practical purposes at hand' (Garfinkel 1967) is treated as a constituent feature of the pragmatics of communicative interaction. This means, of course, that there is entertained, between interactants, an *acceptable margin of difference* between possible ways of telling a story about some event in the world, differences which would not necessarily vitiate the *pivotal* claims being made *within the interaction at hand*. For example, the date the event happened – if the date is not the point, but rather something else about the event,. This margin remains situatedly negotiable and determinable.

²⁵ This also is in agreement with Winch (1972) when he suggests that language presupposes a norm of 'truth-telling' as its operative condition.

²⁶ Although, of course, there are a diverse range of differences within this list that cannot here be addressed in detail here.

members (readers and other reporters equally). Once produced, a media account can also circulate and become incorporated into 'a body of accounts' which can be inspected *as a whole* (as for example, the US press reports about the war against Iraq). What may be distinct with media accounts in this respect, however, is that, unlike a body of institutional records, or a body of letters from the same person, these are produced as 'factual' yet 'public' accounts, *not* by persons involved in the production of the activities, events and indices they speak of, *but from a third person vantage point*, outside the arena of produced action itself, and 'after the fact'. They are thus a body of public accounts, often about publicly *knowable*, in principle available, and publicly consequential events and activities, but accounts that are not necessarily produced as constituents of, or from within, the course of actions and events they speak of. It is here that both their potential claims to 'objectivity' as well as its potential undermining can be located. Media accounts can become a particular sort of archive, a particular kind of record – one whose very *process* of production, unlike that of medical records or birth records for example, may routinely surface as an issue for *ordinary* members.²⁷ And in that procedure, what can emerge is a possible undermining of the premise of account objectivity, or disinterestedness: one can begin to look at systematic ways that these accounts produce the landscapes and terrains they speak of: what they include, what they miss out and how. In other words, although a mediated account may be produced as a self-contained report (which implicitly claims to provide within it all the *relevant*

features of the events and actions being told of), it can nevertheless also be held up by members against other accounts of the same set of events and actions, or they may even be incorporated, as an item, in a series of accounts which are treated as producing a cumulative record of some kind that can be held up against other knowledge and/or experience. Here then, as a body of accounts about a specific matter, *as a collection*, (and attributable to identifiable sources), accounts may be treatable in a distinct way: found to be full, or deficient, truthful or faulty, comprehensive and balanced or selective. Individual accounts may not be subjected to the same treatment. This can be seen in the analysis of, for example, US news coverage of Palestine/Israel.²⁸ News reports are treatable as being produced by persons, who whilst not being party to the field of action on which they report, may nevertheless be vested or 'interested' in the outcomes, as opposed to being disinterested, or who do not necessarily have proper access to all relevant sources or facets of the topic being covered. Herein lies the possible tension between the issue of 'professional codes' of work, and 'practical interests', 'ideological attachments', the irremediable positionality of account producers in the conduct and accomplishment of their work. In this context, disjunctures can arise in a number of ways; between account and 'world', between different accounts, between features implicated by different items within the self-same account/discourse, or between features within the account and the account's hearably intended upshot and their possible implications, resolutions

²⁷ I am here talking of ordinary members of the public, or members of specific constituencies or interested organizations (media watchdogs, publicists, diplomats,) who may function as practical analysts and practical historians. This is quite distinct from the kinds of interest that theoretical and academic historians or researchers might have, or from the kind of interest held by specialized scholars for whom the production of any kind of record or archive may pose an in principle methodological problem.

²⁸ Or of course the coverage of the Iraq, war, or indeed any number of hotly contested public issues. Note here the proliferation of various media watchdog organizations in the USA alone, such as Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting, MediaWatch, Truth in Media, Transparency Now and many more. There have also been many works of academic scholarship in this vein of course, most notably the work of the Glasgow University Media Group in the UK, whose most recent contribution was Philo and Berry's (2004) revealing *Bad News from Israel*

and/or upshots) are even more diverse and multiple.

Media accounts (at least in their *standard format*) are, as indicated earlier, unlike many first person accounts: they do not necessarily offer for the reader/listener/viewer a transparent understanding of their "production process" and of its concrete particulars, the trajectory of work and activity through which they have actually been produced, although, in talking of their sources, they (often) make a claim to doing so. In this latter kind of case, there may sometimes be a shift from locating and specifying the production process of the 'event' they speak of, to the production process of the report that speaks of that event.

Consider a report about the war on Iraq: the *evidentiary* or *indexical* register within which it is produced may remain confused, shift or be equivocal: much of it could rest on accounts, tellings, declarations and descriptions by accountable parties who are themselves agents of the production of the events spoken of (and who may therefore so produce descriptions tied to their own tasks and relevances, however widely or narrowly conceived). Some of it can be based on 'witnessing' either the activities involved (or at least indicative 'cross-sections' of them), or accessing the 'lived' indices/outcomes of the production of the event(s) spoken of.²⁹ That is to say, of course, that the 'lived' trajectory of actions/events has multiple experiential

positions and multiple relational and spatio-temporal locations, and is, situatedly, an unfolding 'complex', giving rise by its very nature to multiple 'perspectives' and outcomes. The analytic-practical problem here then, is twofold:

- 1) the production (or lived) process of the events to be described, and
- 2) the production process of the account itself.

The gap, or the shift, between the two, marks the **problematic of representation**, not merely in the philosophical sense which is spoken of in constructionist and in post-modern theorizing and analysis, but for the ordinary person, **as a practical matter**. The ordinary person is one whose taken for granted understanding of the world is that there is a world out there, independent of any particular construction, that there is a knowable event, and that 'events' have an epistemic integrity to them which makes it possible *in principle* to know the 'truth' of what happened on any one single occasion. This is, as already indicated, one of the taken for granted understandings of the mundane intelligibility of the world, and of social life (informing, among other things, all the procedures of courtroom investigation, as well as forensic practices). And it is from within this attitude that media accounts are taken to be interested, motivated, biased, revealing, one-sided, distorted, superficial, and so on. It remains a concern for ordinary persons, as to whether a specific media account does tell it 'how it is'.³⁰

There is always an in-principle gap between (1) and (2): the news report is routinely, as a matter of methodological principle (one known in common), *after the fact* and routinely *exogenous* to the course of events which it purports to describe. Here lies the importance of

²⁹ This is sometimes called 'on the ground reporting'. In this respect, of course, many war correspondents attempt to cover events *as* they unfold and *from within* the field of action. The high casualty rates among them are a result, but so is the greater credibility and potency of their reports. The new practice of embedded reporters, however, introduced by the US administration in its war against Iraq and elsewhere raises new and interesting questions about some of the implicit understandings and premises of 'on the ground reporting'. This has been a hotly debated issue, indexing and referring to practical understandings of 'objectivity', 'necessity', 'truth-fullness' and 'authority'.

³⁰ Walter Cronkite, who was for over 20 years the anchorman for the CBS evening news, would conclude each of his newscasts with the words: "And that's the way it is on [...date of the newscast]"

'witnessing', and 'lived experiences'. And here one can locate the distinct epistemic status accorded to these, although not without at the same time ramifying other problems related to questions of 'memory' and '(self-)interest'. In relation to the 'account' (the after-the-fact description), the question of 'truth', 'fullness', 'accuracy', etc. is locatable precisely in the methodological question of 'how do you know?', 'what are the grounds for producing *this* account'. This remains intractably relevant, even if it is not actually asked, pursued or addressed: even, in other words, if accounts are accepted at their 'face value' as having met all the criteria of account adequacy.³¹

What provides for the possibility of 'marking' a discrepancy or the gap between (1) and (2)? Or for the substitution for the description of the production of (1) by offering (2). By citing 'authoritative' sources for example? And how does this work then in making sense of the media accounts, not merely as produced texts and descriptions, but as moves with consequences *within* the world? This is, after all, what the institutions of media criticism involve. This is, also, what produces much ordinary debate, contestations, and disputes between parties as to the character of media accounts, and their import.

³¹ This is a particularly marked feature of 3rd person accounts: yet 3rd person accounts produced by someone about a party whom they are taken to know well, such as a spouse, will in actual practical contexts often not be questioned, based on the attribution to the speaker of privileged access as a result of the relationship. There are other presumptions that inform which account, in practice, gets questioned about its sources, but *public* 3rd person accounts are expected, as a matter of course, either explicitly or implicitly, to provide for their credibility. One humorous take on precisely this implicit background understanding is Michael Moore's featuring of George Bush's announcement about a 'terror threat' as being tellingly vague and empty of substantive credibility, in his film "Bowling for Columbine". Issues of first person accountings are, of course, also distinct and diverse.

In what follows, we will pursue features of one kind of disjuncture between different accounts.³² We will address some of the issues that arise from what we might call here the "practical representation problem" as it situatedly arises, and some of the different ways it might so arise and pose communicative issues for members. We will address this within different kinds of media accounts, and inquire into some of the distinct strategies of intelligible accounting that may be correspondingly involved.

Televising Events: Visibility, Deniability and Accountability

In early April of 2004, US forces mounted a heavy siege and attack against the Iraqi city of Fallujah (in what they termed the Sunni triangle), supported by newly organized Iraqi troops. The battle of Fallujah was the focus of concentrated reporting by US and other international media, as well as by Arab media, both print and televisual. The two satellite channels of Al Jazeera and Al Arabiyya covered the events blow by blow, especially Al Jazeera, which had its reporters stationed within the city. The reports by both these stations however, came under a storm of protest and criticism from the US command, and the dispute itself became the focus of much reporting in the ensuing days. Again, the reports on the dispute itself, produced in various modalities, were carried by various media outlets, both print and televisual, Western as well as Arab, including the very channels which were under attack.

What was at issue in the disputed reports? Why was the reporting of Al Jazeera and Al Arabiyya deemed so critical and problematic? How was the dispute articulated, made accountable and managed? And what kind of analytic issues does the entire set of developments raise:

³² For examples of ethnomethodological works on various other sorts of disjunctures see Melvin Pollner (1975) Peter Eglin (1979) Jeff Coulter (1975;1979), and Jayyusi (1984, esp. Chapter 5).

about media accountings, visibility, public contestation and moral order? We will explore some facets of these, probably raising even further analytic issues in the process which must, however, await another forum for inquiry.

Since the dispute specifically arose with respect to televisual reporting (even though many of the claims there were also being made within the Arab print media), it is relevant at this point to begin by a few observations on the nature of television news accounts. Clearly we encounter in these a different organization, and adopt a somewhat different logic of orientation to the text, than that with print accounts. A newscast can start with an anchor reporting the news item, after which it can cut to an on site reporter, giving news directly *from* the field, who can then also interview another person *within* the field of reportable and accountable action and events. Or the anchor can be talking about a party within the field, who are in fact the prime locus of the action being reported on, and we may then cut to a brief shot or slice of that party's available-to-camera action/talk (as, for example, someone emerging from a high level meeting, visiting a disaster site, or giving a press conference). There is here a visible lamination of courses of action, engagement and orientation which in the print report are collapsed into one another in one *seemingly* seamless report. In the latter, even the quoted remarks attributed to a third party are visibly accessed through the discourse of the report itself and its formulations, despite the appearance of 'excerption' that the practice of quotation marks accomplishes. In the television context, however, they may each have, to some extent, an equivalent immediacy: in other words, each may be seen as constituted within its own space-time. Moreover, they are not co-constitutive of the actual accountable 'event' in the world (at least not equally so) but only, and even then contingently, of the media event (the "broadcast event"). The TV field reporter's work is routinely

oriented to by members, in the first instance, as a momentary point of direct access to, or as an 'excerption' from, the flow of events. We are invited to 'see' as through a 'window' – through this 'window', the courses of action of reporter/videographer on one hand, and agents within the field of action on the other, are treatable as constituents of larger trajectories which are essentially *disarticulated* in their production and only conjoined contingently in the movement to afford this window.³³ The persons whose words we encounter may be encountered (save for translation issues which we must put aside for now³⁴) almost with the same sort of immediacy. It is as though we are transported into their *presence*. We are purportedly brought in to see for ourselves.

Let us now return to the dispute which arose over the coverage by Arab satellite television of the attack on Fallujah. On its

³³ In the June 2005 issue of *Gulf Marketing Review*, published in the Gulf, an ad appears for Al-Arabiyya television network which captures and re-inscribes this very modality of mediation: on the top, shown within the frame of a large screen (presumably the television screen) a viewer sits on a comfortable armchair, watching a group of presumably US soldiers in the desert, dressed in full gear and moving towards him in the midst of what seems to be a haze of sand. Both viewer and viewed, the seated man and the soldiers, are within the frame so that they appear to share the same space. The caption, in Arabic, written on the purple band at the bottom of the screen reads : "Closer to the Truth". Text, in English, appears beneath the supposed TV screen, in what is clearly an indexing of Al-Arabiyya's role in covering what until only recently had been the little known city of Fallujah "... we provide Arab viewers with impartial on-the-ground reports from wherever news happens, from Fallujah and Beirut to Cairo, Riyadh, Paris and Washington DC, just to name a few....."

³⁴ For an ethnomethodological perspective on this issue of 'translation' see Bjelić (1999), who draws on, and analytically responds to, Baudrillard's work on simulation. However, one can note here that in various contexts of translation work, there may be an available range of potentially relevant categories which can be used as adequate, or even as *interchangeable, for some particular practical purposes in-situ*.

April 16, 2004 newscast Al Jazeera showed the following report:³⁵

Anchor (in Arabic): "The US Defense Secretary mounted an attack on the Al Jazeera channel and accused it of offering inaccurate coverage with regards to *the civilian casualties in Iraq* and he said that what Al Jazeera was broadcasting and which *refers to the killing of hundreds of Iraqi civilians at the hands of the American forces* constitutes a shameful act, in his terms."

Cut to shot of press conference: a US officer first appears on screen then camera pans to Rumsfeld (US Defense Secretary) at his side, wagging his finger with a pen: (in English) "...categorically say what Al Jazeera is doing is vicious"/

Off screen translation in Arabic comes in: /"I can say categorically that what Al Jazeera is doing is an evil act and not accurate and cannot be excused/justified. *I cannot specify the numbers of human casualties in Fallujah* for we are *not present in the city and our forces do not deliberately kill hundreds of innocent civilians*, it is just scandalous nonsense and what this station is doing is a shameful thing." (italics added)³⁶

³⁵ This was broadcast at 9:00 pm Dubai time.

³⁶ 'Tabreer' was the root of the Arabic word used in the translation of Rumsfeld's "inexcusable": it can stand for either 'justification' or 'excuse'. The Arabic word "scandalous" was the one used to translate Rumsfeld's "outrageous", the latter being the word which actually appeared in the English transcript of the press conference. The translation in the Al Jazeera broadcast did not render a *strictly* equivalent organization and use of terms as in the English original. These are issues which we will not be able to address at any length in this paper. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this analysis, the differences which appear in this particular translation do not affect the points being raised, specifically the *deep grammar* of the claims being made by the different parties. The transcript of the original press conference in English was available independently of course, but the press conference itself was presumably the material for both televisual reportage as well as print reports. One place where a section of this portion of the press conference was excerpted and used was on the site of the Institute for Public Accuracy, under the headline: "Al Jazeera: Blaming the Messenger" on April 30th (accessed April 8, 2005), <http://www.accuracy.org/newsrelease.php?articleId=309>

What follows is the relevant section of the transcript of the original press conference as it was officially released:³⁷

Defense Department Operational Updated Briefing

Q: General Pace, talking about Fallujah, we continue to hear from Marine commanders that there are a lot of foreign fighters on the ground and perhaps a lot of them are being killed. Can you describe the enemies that they're facing there in Fallujah? Is it largely foreign terrorists?

GEN. PACE: Don't know yet because there are still many in the city, so we're not sure what the flavors of those who are fighting are yet. Clearly there have been a lot of fighters who have been killed, but to try to describe a percentage or a type of fighter right now, I don't have that data.

Q: If I could follow up, Monday General Abizaid chastised Al- Jazeera and Al-Arabiyah for their coverage of Fallujah and saying that *hundreds of civilians* were being killed. Is there an estimate on how many civilians have been killed in that fighting? And can you definitively say that *hundreds of women and children and innocent civilians* have not been killed?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I can definitively say that what Al-Jazeera is doing is vicious, inaccurate and inexcusable.

Q: Do you have a civilian casualty count?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Of course not, we're not in the city. But you know what our forces do; they *don't go around killing hundreds of civilians*. That's just outrageous nonsense! It's disgraceful what that station is doing. (all italics added)

What surfaces as the hub of the Al Jazeera report, as well as a specific issue in the exchange in the press conference - the

³⁷The transcript was made available on these sites: <http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2004/tr20040415-secdef0622.html> <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2004/04/mil-040415-dod02.htm> (Accessed April 8, 2005).

point of the dispute - is the number and character of those killed in the fighting in Fallujah: the number of casualties, their kind, and the agent responsible for that. A straightforward, morally accountable matter, the very stuff of moral order: a body count, life and death, and responsibility for that. *Laminated onto that is the issue of the character of the reporting itself.* The very fact of this dispute, and its character, highlights the *unavailability at first hand* to viewers and members of the news audience. Indeed in some respects without reports in and from the scene, the general 'events' themselves may not even be 'known'. In other words, outside of the institution and practice of media reporting, the events, for many, would not even be part of their horizon of possible knowledge. In this we see 'media institutions' as ones that constitute technologies of access, retrieval and knowledge production. That there is a dispute as to what was taking place there, and then, is not merely a dispute of *interpretation*, as some disagreements often are, not simply a difference of viewpoint or perspective, but literally one over facticity and actuality: what *actually* unfolded, what took place, who died, how many died, and who was responsible for that and how. It is a *forensic* dispute. And like all such disputes, it rests on the unavailability, first hand, of the *lived* course of production of the event(s) and its outcomes, of what *now* constitutes itself as given, as fact. The audience, the viewers, (or the readers) i.e. the recipients of media discourse (various other members of the press, as well as ordinary folk watching their TV sets) are in the very nature of things not present, and therefore not witnesses (or parties) to the course of production and thus its immediate consequences, the matters which are at issue. The unavailability of the course of production is, as we earlier indicated, a routine feature of much of the spaces and activities of the world that are, nevertheless and properly so, objects of and for knowledge, matters which need ascertainment, or are even treated as given

at times. That is to say, for many items which constitute topics of knowledge for members in the world (practical matters for knowing and acting upon), the resources for such knowledge have to be produced *post hoc* and at a remove from the actual course of production of the act in question. In a sense, mediated accounts, accounts produced in the media, are producing purported 'knowledge' of events, persons and activities not available directly (at the very least not entirely) or in their immediacy of unfolding to ordinary members. The media present this as just their business- this is precisely one of the modes of self-presentation implicit in media reportage. Indeed, it is in this sense that the mass media function, ostensibly at least, as both a technology of retrieval and visibility, *and* of accounting.

In the context of the Fallujah events it is the *outcome* of the events that is by far the most significant matter: the numbers of casualties and who they are: women and children versus 'insurgents' as appears in numerous other accounts produced at that time. The fact and number of civilian casualties, *is in one sense perceivable as the 'event'* but it is *also an 'outcome' of the other events which led up to it.* It is the character of these prior events (which produced *this* one, this *outcome*) that is at issue. The 'outcome' (the killing of women and children) here, may be treated as, in a sense, 'larger' than the actions/events that may have produced it.³⁸

The *outcome of a course of action* is programmatically relevant in the moral calculus of ordinary members, even as it may be variously described, mitigated or managed. This is done by individuating the elements of a course of action which produced the 'outcome'. Certain sorts of outcomes are clearly and irremediably constitutable and accountable in morally significant ways. What is clearly the case

³⁸ Here is the significance of Eric D'Arcy's point about elisions of actions and their outcomes which I discuss elsewhere. See D'Arcy (1963, esp. chap. 1) and Janyusi (1984, chap. 6)

here is the mutual orientation to the moral significance of the claimed events in Fallujah, and of their profound import for the constitution of the character of the agents who produced that outcome in the first place. And that, in turn, is implicative for the characterization of the setting within which such events transpired, and of the relationships between the agents, and between the different parties to the situation: how the story (history) of these events is to be recounted.

In the press conference the question which is asked, and around which the Al Jazeera report was produced, starts with mention of the criticism of Arab television (al Jazeera and Al-Arabiyah) "for their coverage of Fallujah and saying that hundreds of civilians were being killed". This is what, drawing on the work of Fred Dretske (1977), can be described as an allomorphically sensitive propositional context: the critique of the statement that "hundreds of civilians were being killed" (implicitly here by American forces) is one which can take different forms of focal emphasis.

In an article entitled "Referring to Events", Dretske distinguishes between various possible versions of a statement or proposition which refers to an event, describing these versions as variants of possible "contrastive focusing" (or what he also describes as contrastive emphasis on p. 370) that can be implicated in the proposition delivered. For example, he suggests that the fact given in the proposition "Susan stole the bicycle" (p.370) can be described in this *self same sequence* of words "in a variety of ways": as "Susan stole the bicycle" if the question is who stole it, or as "Susan stole the bicycle" if the question is what she stole (and one can add as "Susan *stole* the bicycle" if the question is what she did with the bicycle). Such contrastive emphasis has classically been treated, he suggests, as a matter not of what is said but how it is said: that is, that the different patterns of stress do not affect the

proposition being made, but simply express the speakers beliefs about what his interlocutors are interested in. Dretske suggests, however, that the case is different once the proposition is embedded in a *larger context*, (as for example in "George *advised* Susan to steal the bicycle") and that in such contexts, it is the *semantic content* of the proposition that is affected: in other words, what one then has are different embodiments (or variants) of the proposition, depending on the contrastive focus. He suggests that the truth value, and so also the "meaning of the larger expression, is a function of the emphatic focus of the smaller expression embedded in it". He terms such variants different *allomorphs* of the proposition (or claim), or *propositional allomorphs*. And he calls the contexts in which they relevantly arise, *allomorphically sensitive contexts* (p. 371). This is any larger statement whose truth and meaning depends on the specific allomorph embedded in it. Dretske suggests, in other words, that these allomorphs are not merely matters of intonation and stress extrinsic to the semantics of the proposition. Rather, he argues that in *causal* contexts of claim—such as those which he suggests are given and present, for example, with the use of *epistemic* verbs (e.g. "X remembers that M...")- *which* particular element of the event is being 'targeted' in the larger claim makes a difference. Thus when claims are embedded in such larger expressions, they refer to different causal elements in the causal chain, and constitute "allomorphically sensitive contexts".

While Dretske is concerned with accounting for these contexts and the allomorphic distinctions they make operative or possible, I am concerned in this paper with their interactive implications for practical contexts of reporting, claiming, judging and accounting. Dretske is correct, but the argument he embarks on to demonstrate this perhaps misses the larger critical context here: this is the interactional and praxio-logical contexts of claim making in

the first place. If we replace the 'causal' context he argues as being the operative register here with a "judgmental context", we will find that this is indeed still open to an allomorphic analysis such as Dretske proposes. Judgmental contexts of course include 'causal' attributions and judgments, and epistemic claims, and the latter are routine features of practico-moral contestation or disagreement, but the issues that arise in this respect routinely have to do with questions of accountability.

Thus, it is not only the use of epistemic verbs and expressions which constitute allomorphically sensitive contexts, but in principle, all contexts of *contestation* where 'deniability' (culpability, liability, and responsibility) is programmatically relevant. Allomorphic variants of claims are implicative for the possible interactional trajectories that may arise in their contexts, and which bear intimate ties to the practices of practico-moral accountability, blame and judgment- the moral dimensions of practical activities. In this context, we need to note, that any or all claims or attributions may end up contested and are, in principle, contestable.

In that the *forensic architecture* (the investigable organization) of any trajectory of actions and interactions can be decomposed into various discriminable elements (agency, outcome, objective, and relationships), whose discriminability may be practico-morally accountable or significant, any context of contestation can be allomorphically presented. The *allomorphically active* context may be any context where there is a difference/dispute, arising from or embedded in a narratologically *dense* trajectory of events and actions.

In the case of the disputed Al Jazeera report here ("...General Abizaid chastised Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya for their coverage of Fallujah and saying that hundreds of civilians were being killed"), an allomorphic analysis becomes relevant in the contexts of the contestation of the

charge (or its deniability): that it is not 'hundreds' (of civilians/women and children) that have been killed, or alternatively not 'civilians', or yet alternatively not (as the implicit claim goes) at the hands of US forces. The counter claims (each taking as its propositional base a distinct allomorphic form of the original statement) could be:

Tens are being killed (not *hundreds*) or
 Hundreds of fighters posing as civilians are being killed (not *civilians*) or
 Hundreds have been injured/made homeless (not *killed*) or
 Hundreds have been killed by the actions of insurgents in the city -to lay blame on the US-... (not by *American forces*)³⁹

The questioning in the press conference, however, is pressed further beyond the reference to the claim and its rejection:

"is there an estimate on how many civilians have been killed in that fighting? And can you definitively say that hundreds of women and children and innocent civilians have not been killed?"

This is a question which invites an explicit and distinct denial. But this does not come. Rumsfeld does not give a straight denial, but instead shifts the statements to charging al-Jazeera television with doing something "vicious, inaccurate and inexcusable". Here, the denial is implicit: the charge that sums up Al Jazeera's

³⁹ This was a strategy actually used by various US media commentators on the fighting in Fallujah, as well as some Israeli sites discussing the Jenin battle of March 2002. See, for an example the article by Robert D. Alt published in the *Weekly Standard* on April 21st, 2004 under the title "The Al Jazeera Effect". See: CBSNEWS.com at <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2004/04/21/opinion/main612983.shtml> (Accessed on April 23rd, 2004). Alt, writes: "Indeed there is substantial evidence that the insurgents are taking deliberate steps to increase the number of women and children killed by Coalition forces. In a firefight over the weekend in the border town of Husaybah, insurgents used women and children as human shields to block mortar positions. Similar reports are beginning to come from Falluja."

reportage as vicious and inaccurate is one that suggests that the details of the reportage, as made available to the viewers/readers through the words of the question in the press conference, are not fully correct: the charge is denied implicitly through the definitive counter charge of inaccuracy. What is interesting about this denial, however, is that it is not a full and complete denial of the charge: but simply of its scope, and modality. It is a formulation sustained within an allomorphic context: i.e. it is one which maintains the possibility of reformulating any potential-counter evidence (that has been produced or *may yet be produced*) into a mitigated condition, a mitigated understanding of the denial. An allomorphic version, in other words, which suggests that it was not perhaps 'hundreds' that were killed, or that those killed are people who look like civilians but were not really, and so on. This maintains the claim to truthfulness while assimilating counter evidence to a full denial. These are options for further potential negotiation of the morally implicative facts (should they come to light.).

But obviously, the preference in such contexts would be for a complete denial, instead of having to refigure or rearticulate or decompose the reported into allomorphic components. It is precisely the visual aspects of Arab television reportage, however, made visible to a mass public, which made such denial difficult. In response to Rumsfeld's indirect denial which maintains the space for subsequent allomorphic restatements, he is asked "do you have a civilian casualty count?". Rumsfeld's response is "Of course not, we're not in the city". Had it rested at that, the denial would have, in principle, and accountably, been on problematic terrain: Arab television was "in the city". It is precisely that which was the problem, facing US spokespersons with both the problem of attribution to them of seriously implicative actions, and the need for their denial. Rumsfeld continues:

"But you know what our forces do; they *don't go around killing hundreds of civilians...*" (italics added)

The idiomatic hearing of the phrase "go around killing" suggests pattern, collective habit, perhaps awareness of the actions and their outcomes. Purposefulness, cumulativeness and selectivity are all implicitly embedded in, and therefore retrievable from, this phrase. In denying this, Rumsfeld here appeals to, and invokes, the shared knowledge of an institution identified as 'ours' ("our forces"): in other words he appeals to a 'trust' in the nature, functions *and* functioning of the collective institution, as a constituent of shared moral legitimacy and the authority it sustains. In this, his words function as the affirmation of that legitimacy, and that shared collective social order, which has reflexively vested him with the authority to speak on and about it, and thus they work as an appeal to trust in the institution through 'trust' in what he has to say on its behalf and about it. Rumsfeld thus denies intentional targeting and -implicitly - intentional neglect of the outcome of operations on civilians (such as might be attributable in carpet bombing, for example).

While Rumsfeld purports not to have access to the locale, ('we', as an institution, or as 'command') and therefore to the scene of the events and to the possibility of being able to have witnessed them directly, and thus to give testimony (or evidence) or know factually the concrete particulars (the "civilian casualty count"), he does speak of the events in a way that nevertheless lays a claim to knowledge, and which runs counter to the claims of Al Jazeera. It is *his speaking and assertion*, as official spokesman for a duplicatively organized membership categorization device which is meant to stand as the guarantor of the truth of the claim/denial.⁴⁰ The denial is meant

⁴⁰ The notion of a duplicatively organized membership categorization device comes from Sacks (1974) in his seminal paper "On the Analyzability of Stories by Children". He uses this

to be taken as it is and thus, reflexively, as on trust: one of the ways in which claims are assessed for their truth value is to inspect the sources of these claims (both personally and institutionally). This is of course, one of the procedures used and usable in court room proceedings, and it is also a pervasive background feature of everyday 'transactions of facticity'. It is routinely or often *in the uttering of a denial* that the 'force' of that denial is intended to have its play, given the auspices under which it is produced: institutional auspices, by persons in authority within that institution. In the routine course of affairs, the institution lends force/authority to the denial, as the denial confirms the institution as trustworthy, unless and until this is reviewed in light of new 'facts', or 'evidence'. *Unless, in other words, locatable indices come to light to cast greater or lesser doubt on that matter.* Note that institutional norms, understandings and frameworks are thus made implicitly relevant. Rumsfeld offers no other sources of verification, no evidence: just a counter claim, and a categorical assertion that American forces do not do what they have been accused of doing. The point is, however, that in this assertion, the allomorphic structure may still allow future back downs: not "hundreds", but a few; not "go around killing" but un-intended killing; not "women and children", but perhaps some women only. Here is perhaps where the force, or the 'work' of the assertion "we are not in the city" (in response to the question about a civilian casualty count) comes into focus. Rather than a comprehensive

to refer to devices which may be thought of "by a prototypical name 'team'" (p.220). He goes on "When such a device is used on a population, what is done is to take its categories, treat the set of categories as defining a unit, and place members of the population into cases of the unit" (p.220), and "A population so treated is partitioned into cases of the unit, cases for which what properly holds is that various persons partitioned into any case are 'co-incumbents' of that case" (p. 221.). The point that can be made here, of course, is that such 'units' also can hearably have 'spokespersons'.

negation "we have not killed *any* women and children/civilians" or "we *never* kill any women and children/civilians" he *produces a counter claim in the precise form of the alleged original claim*: "hundreds of civilians". Any compound claim or attribution may be countered in 'degrees'. Responding to the full force of the claim with a *simple* negation or counter-claim nevertheless can leave open the space for future counter-claims/denials of a similar but 'lower' valency to be made. This seems to be a programmatic option in the management of claims, which, after all, are constituted through a particular conjuncture of elements (agents, objects, circumstances, recipients, outcomes, *and* the webs of moral and practical accountability which attend such 'compound' attributions). *Any contestation of a claim can therefore be subject to an 'individuation' of the particulars of the course of action or events which are the 'text' of that claim.* In this case, by producing not an *already* mitigated denial, but a 'mirror image' denial of Al Jazeera's claim, Rumsfeld in the process, accomplishes two things:

- 1) suggests that Al Jazeera's claims are false
- 2) produces a *still mitigable* denial (one which is still down-gradable) allowing for allomorphically pitched back downs or exceptions, if circumstances produce the need.

Thus "allomorphically sensitive contexts", and allomorphic propositions, are ones that may be encountered in the very contexts of contestation, disagreements, and differences surrounding claims about action-event trajectories. They are locatable optionalities of communicative interaction that are embedded in the irremediably composite and therefore individuat-able (decomposable) character of such trajectories, and the moral accountabilities implicated by them; thus the contestations attendant on them, within the weave of social life.

One of the critical issues here that surfaced in regard to the coverage of the Fallujah siege is that of 'access' (and the 'visibility' available and embedded in that) to the scene of the course of production of topical events. It is here where the decisive relevance and importance of witnesses and first hand testimony is located. And it is these to which the appeal to 'trust' and to the institutional legitimacy (and authority) which grounds it are counter-posed. This institutional legitimacy (and the trust invoked in its name) is a problematic terrain for accounting in such settings: prior knowledge of, or belief in, institutional workings and order (in its double meaning), and the networks of legitimacy embodied in and embedding authority claims, *thus the operations of trust itself*, are differentially distributed, among different populations. The political problem, in the context of *foreign diplomacy* and often in internal disputes, is how to shift the legitimacy (force) of authority claims, and the implicitly or explicitly invoked entitlements to trust, from their grounding in their endogenous context to a context or constituency in which those features are *not* operative. In other words, moving them from a context in which the institution in question is 'at home' (in some way categorically bound with other categories in a larger duplicatively organized membership category such as 'nation-state', 'our country') to somewhere else.

This of course becomes much more difficult in the context of contrastive, especially *perceptually available/grounded accounts*, such as those which Al Jazeera broadcast. It is important to note here the actual character of Al Jazeera's reporting on the fighting in Fallujah at the time it took place.⁴¹ This was continuous live reporting (i.e. in real time) from inside Fallujah, set up from makeshift positions, (one of which, for example, was a rooftop

⁴¹ At the time I watched Al Jazeera's reports consistently and round the clock, as did, by all accounts, millions of other viewers in the Arab world.

overlooking the local hospital and the road leading out from Fallujah). People were constantly being brought on camera: witnesses, survivors, doctors, literally retrieved and called out and over (sometimes in full camera-view) from the visibly naturally organized and occurring (sic!) flow of injuries, emergencies, and attempted flights to tell their story. Faces and voices full of anger, fear, and worry. At one point, we are shown the long track of cars, piled high with home furnishings and personal goods, filled with families, driving BACK into Fallujah on the road leading outside the city: we are told they have been denied exit from the city, denied the flight to safety. One man comes up on the roof and tells how the members of his family were shot on the forced trip back. It is hard for the viewer not to draw conclusions. It is no longer words, and accounts, but a 'fit' between accounts and the perceptually available, *even though mediated*, particulars that becomes operative for practical reasoners here. This is the power of live reportage.⁴²

How do you counteract that? How to erase or decisively undermine the perceptual constitution of an 'epistemic condition', a 'state of knowledge', i.e. a rationally accountable understanding which is perceptually based?

⁴² The Baghdad bureau of Al Jazeera was closed down in August 2004, and barred from the capital. Note how in the 2nd major offensive against Fallujah, in November 2004, no press was allowed into the city, and no coverage from within the scene of battle was available, except for reporters embedded with US forces (and footage from soldiers themselves which appeared on various blogs and sites). Embedded video reporting still caused no end of problems for the occupying forces, however. This was amply demonstrated when a video of a wounded unarmed Iraqi prisoner being shot dead in a Fallujah mosque, taken by Kevin Sites of the embedded NBC team, was circulated and reported. See, for example, the news report on this by Andrew Buncombe which was published in *The Independent*, on November 16, 2004. This can be found on http://news.independent.co.uk/world/middle_east/article20502.ece. (Accessed March 29th, 2005)

In a report published in *The Guardian* on April 21st, 2004, entitled 'Reality Television', Al Jazeera is again the focus:

"When US forces recently demanded that a team from the Arabic TV station al-Jazeera leave Fallujah as a condition for reaching a ceasefire with the local resistance, it came as no surprise at the network's headquarters in Doha.....

.....
"My solution is to change the channel," Brigadier General Mark Kimmit said this month in Baghdad, "to a legitimate, authoritative, honest news station. The stations that are showing Americans *intentionally* killing women and children are not legitimate news sources." (italics added).⁴³

What is operative here in Kimmit's statement is the use of a notion of 'legitimacy' and 'authority' to counter what is visually being displayed or shown. The statement "The stations ... showing Americans intentionally killing women and children are not legitimate news sources" again, as in Rumsfeld's utterances earlier, is allomorphically sensitive, allomorphically mitigable and renegotiable: they may be killing women and children but not intentionally; they may be 'displacing' (or even 'threatening') women and children (to ferret out insurgent relatives); they (the Americans) may not be the ones doing the killing of women and children, even though they are fighting in the city. Note again that it is reflexively through Kimmit's pronouncement, that the invocation of 'trust' is made: by questioning the legitimacy and authority of news stations which show Americans responsible for the deaths of women and children in Fallujah, Kimmit invokes and appeals to an alternative legitimacy, and thus to the trust in that. This legitimacy is now reconstituted and affirmed as accountable and proper, through *his own* enunciation as an official spokesperson. What helps make

this an allomorphically sensitive statement or denial is the nature of 'killing' as an *outcome verb* (Jayyusi 1993a).

Outcome verbs are intention indeterminate. Even though 'intentionality' may be implicated in their situated usage, such implication is a function of the co-location of contextual particulars with the programmatically relevant moral accountability made relevant in and through the attribution of an outcome (here the killing of women and children), to anyone's action (whatever that 'action' later turns out to have been). The accountability is of the 'outcome' itself: that is the morally larger event. For this reason, the specific qualification of the 'outcome' (killing women and children) with *explicit* intentionality (Kimmit's "intentionally killing"; Rumsfeld's "go around killing") makes the claim *allomorphically degradable*: the outcome may *in the end* stand, (for that is, after all, a matter *in principle* of corporeal evidentiary knowledge and availability), where the *intention* is nevertheless defeated. In that event, the denial may not be read like an outright falsehood.

Again, what is obvious within this report is the orientation, on the part of the US command, as well as the reporter's account, to both 'presence' as a source of authority, a *forensic resource* (for witnessing), and 'trust' (which is predicated on a number of criteria, including institutional procedures known and made relevant in common). In this case, the two categories of 'source' are being used disjunctively and conflictually, pitted against each other. Now even 'perceptual knowledge' or 'perceptually available evidence' is itself subject to the criterion of (institutional) trust, and thus of the legitimacy of alternative politico-moral orders.⁴⁴

⁴³ See <http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,3604,1197129,00.html> (Accessed April 23rd, 2004).

⁴⁴ This is a somewhat different inflection of the notion of 'trust' to that discussed by Garfinkel (1963; 1967), where it is a foundational moral constituent of the 'natural attitude' in the conduct of everyday action and interaction. For a discussion of

Thus, Kimmit's denial, like Rumsfeld's, may be read allomorphically. In Kimmit's utterance one could still hear that Americans may have killed women and children unintentionally, i.e., *as collateral damage*, which is of course, nevertheless still morally implicative of their actions.⁴⁵ Here again the individuation of the sub-elements, the constituents of a putative course of actions and a putative trajectory of events, is involved: the whole description *and* its constituent parts are simultaneously subject to inquiry, assessment, and re-specification on the part of members. Where there is any change in any of the latter, the overall upshot or implicativeness of the description of the entire course, as a whole, may be transformed. However, here is where practical attribution and moral responsibility may be made to part ways and diverge, to operate disjunctively with respect to each other. This is a significant communicative option and method for the management of consequences and accountable outcomes. We shall not be able to address this at any length here, but may note that in other reports this is often discursively displayed.⁴⁶

this, see Jayyusi (1991, pp. 235-40). Garfinkel's notion of 'trust' is, nevertheless, still systematically relevant in the production, assessment and orientation to new knowledge claims. For an interesting discussion of the role of the notion of 'trust' in 'knowledge' see Shapin's important book (1994) where he demonstrates the morally organized character of the production of scientific knowledge. For a brief discussion of 'trust' as an epistemic notion, see also Laura Origgi (2004).

⁴⁵ Consistent use of this term, since the 1st Iraq war, and critical commentary on it, indicating its moral accountability, may be found in abundance in various statements, bulletins, reports and articles on the wars against Iraq, the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia, the war on Afghanistan, and other conflicts.

⁴⁶ For example, a long report on the Fallujah attack in April, published on CBSNews.com (www.cbsnews.com/stories/2004/04/11/iraq/main611287.shtml) on April 11th 2004 (accessed April 11th 2004) includes the following: "Asked Sunday about the number of Iraqi casualties in Fallujah, Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt referred reporters to Marine spokesmen. But he insisted that marines are 'tremendously precise' in their operations and

In this case, *The Guardian* report, however, goes on to say:

"The Al Jazeera reports of US snipers firing at women and children in the streets of Fallujah have now been corroborated by international observers in the city".

Here the description used is cast in the active voice rather than through an elision of act with outcome. The claim at issue (and which has been the issue of the other reports addressed) appears here flanked by its attribution to Al Jazeera, *and* the statement of its corroboration by 'international observers' who are 'in the city'. This attends, in a powerful way, to Kimmit's denial and affirmation of legitimacy. First, the claim at issue here appears in the form "US snipers firing at women and children in the streets of Fallujah", and is itself translatable back into "intentionally killing women and children"⁴⁷. 'Sniper' is an action-consequent or action-based category (see Jayyusi 1984); a description generated by the activity a person performs: the activity "sniping" is an intentional activity and though it does not deliver an outcome, it is outcome-implicative. (Jayyusi 1993a) To 'snipe' is to deliberately and knowingly pick someone out to shoot at.⁴⁸ Thus its use involves an attribution of intent to shoot, of firing at someone in order to hit them: its routinely expectable outcome, 'killing', is then attributable as *an intended*

suggested insurgents were hiding among civilians, causing any civilian deaths".

⁴⁷ It is important to note that member's everyday orientation as they read, understand, comment on, and orient to, various news-reports evidences the circulation of ideas and claims, known in common and held as a resource. In this respect, this circulation and weave is also evident and embodied in the organization of news reports themselves. For a discussion relevant to the latter issue, see Nekvapil and Leudar (2002) on what they call "dialogical networks".

⁴⁸ The dictionary definition of 'snipe' includes: "to shoot at single men from cover"; "to pick off by rifle-fire from (usu. distant) cover"- *Chamber's Twentieth Century Dictionary*, 1959 edition. Edited by William Geddies. London/UK: W.R. Chambers Ltd.

outcome. In this way, both Kimmit's and Rumsfeld's denials, which can be allomorphically negotiable ones (killing without intention) are themselves defeated in-whole within this report: i.e. no space is left for the allomorphic back down, or *degradability* of the first claim which they had contested. Moreover, this 'defeasion' of their claim is done through attribution to 'international observers' who are "in the city" Here both the conditions of visibility (and perceptually based knowledge) are fulfilled, as well as, at least potentially, the argument from 'trust'. In this case, the possibility of the condition of 'trust' (transformed implicitly here into 'trustworthiness'⁴⁹) being met adequately is locatable in the category 'international observers' itself: at the very least, and significantly, this places these agents in a location which is not constituted by direct interest and/or involvement: the fundamental issue that may reconfigure some 'source' as perhaps not 'objective' and therefore not 'reliable'.

This 'corroboration', furthermore, renders an added element: that of the *iterability* of 'witness', 'knowledge', and 'claim', iterability in difference, produced from different perspectives, sources, social locations, producing multiple sightings and witnessings which are, thus also cumulative. Such cumulative iterability has a special purchase or potency in the practical calculus of *believability*, and of everyday procedures of verifiability.⁵⁰

In *The Guardian* report Kimmit's words implicitly suggest that the 'truth' of particular 'facts' can be known in and of itself, by the operation of 'trust', despite

what is *shown* by Al Jazeera.⁵¹ Any stations which show "Americans intentionally killing women and children" are "not legitimate news sources". He explicitly invokes the notion of legitimacy. Note here that he does not speak of American 'soldiers' but of "Americans", invoking a wider web of identification and legitimacy. The notion of 'legitimacy' in practical contexts is a concept embedded in a practical 'history' of persons and institutions: track records, values endorsed and known, the power to effect deeds in accord with declared and shared principles, to accomplish tasks as accountably expected and acceptable, and by commonly acknowledged standards and so on. A whole array of embedded understandings come together with the use of a notion of legitimacy: understandings which both constitute and are embedded in an idea of a 'history' and social structure that is thus locally and reflexively invoked. "Legitimacy" can act as both a gloss for a whole array of particulars and, at the same time, as a self-reflexively produced feature. In saying what he said, Kimmit is contrastively invoking the legitimacy of "Americans" and of "the US army" (for whom he speaks, and which is the agent practically involved) with the legitimacy of a 'foreign' news channel, a foreign organization⁵². Indeed, for US and English speaking viewers/readers, it may be just in this way that these news channels are constituted as 'foreign' even where the term is not explicitly used. This can work only in the contexts where such legitimacy is

⁴⁹ One of the interesting and analytically significant issues that consistently surfaces in attending to this material is the issue of the intelligible in situ 'transformability' of relevances, descriptions, and attributions, and the acceptable range of such transformations, an issue that must await another occasion for extended address.

⁵⁰ On the potency of cumulative iterability in a different context see Jayyusi (2007)

⁵¹ One might note here the distinction, for members, between 'truth' and 'facts' although they are treated as mutually reconstituting. One can 'emplot' the same facts into different narrative versions: this is when the 'facts' are demonstrably intractable, as evident in the accounts of the Israeli attack on Jenin in April 2002, where civilians were clearly killed, and now in Fallujah. I borrow the notion of 'emplotment' from the work of Hayden White (1973), who applies it to the writing of historical narratives and the work of historiography.

⁵² It is noteworthy that numerous blogs, letters and conversations appeared on the internet on precisely this 'change the channel' injunction which Kimmit produced.

indeed accorded the institution (or order) the speaker is invoking: and it works even then only through the operation of a 'trust' in the *continued workings* of the institution (or the duplicative organized membership categorization device of which it is a constituent element: the American army, the USA, and so on.) in accord with past standards, histories, shared understandings and self claims. In this case, Kimmit is invoking an orientation to 'trust' and privileging it over the orientation both to 'presence', and to the visible (to what is shown and seen).

Much of the debate, then, about the Iraq war, including about *media coverage of the war*, (and indeed the fate of journalists in it), had to do with issues of *reporting* and *showing*, claiming and producing evidence that can be acknowledged. From Powell's unfortunate appearance before the UN Security Council to the huge debate about the non-finding of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, to the shooting of the journalists on the eve of the invasion of Baghdad on April 8th 2003 (which was still being described on Arab satellite TV, at the one year anniversary of the invasion, as the 'killing of the witness').⁵³ All these turned on the balance of claiming, reporting and telling and/or saying, within the frame of implicitly invoked legitimacy and trust on the one hand, and on the other hand, of showing, and seeing in the production of 'knowledge'. As Wittgenstein (1974) says, "knowledge in the end rests on acknowledgment": the organization of

acknowledgment, or the production of consensus on 'facticity' and 'truth' and 'truth-fulness', may have many routes and trajectories, multiple features, methodologies and grounds in everyday life: but one of them, at least in the world of the everyday, is that of producing 'evidence' to be seen and assessed. What has the status of 'evidence' is, of course, diverse, contextual and already itself informed by webs of knowledge and/or belief. Thus although what would count as 'evidence' for something may differ in the contemporary world than in previous eras, or from culture to culture (a man writhing on the floor may have been evidence in previous times of 'devil possession' where it may now be seen as evidence of 'epilepsy' or of some kind of 'malady' or pain) the *modality of many claims to 'truth'* is, in part, emergent from the balance between the elements of authoritative telling and of demonstrating. In certain contexts, the less given by way of being shown and demonstrated, (and one here acknowledges the technologies which can go into the production of demonstrable proof, and evidence, and the ways these can indeed manufacture items which may be claimed to have the status of actual indices/evidences), the more there may be a claim based on the categorical/institutional foundation of legitimacy, on 'trust'. But note here, that 'trust' itself, to be upheld over the course of time and through changing and diverse contexts, needs to be at certain junctures supported by the demonstration of its efficacy and entitlement: through demonstrations where the particulars of real worldly contexts unfold in keeping with the claims of what, how and why that are made about the significance of such particulars, in advance or post hoc

Striations of the Visible: Moral Order and Corporeality

The above is, in fact, consistent with another interview Kimmit gave on Al Jazeera in which he accuses the station of spreading falsehoods about the

⁵³ See for example Sidney Blumenthal's report in *The Guardian* on April 22, 2004 "What Colin Powell saw but didn't say" where he describes the process leading up to Powell's presentation at the UN in the following way: "Cheney's chief of staff, I Lewis 'Scooter' Libby, gives him a 60-page brief that Powell dismisses as filled with 'murky' intelligence. Powell goes to CIA headquarters himself, where he discovers that 'he could no longer trace anything because it had been "masticated over in the White House so that the exhibits didn't match the words. He hastily constructs his own case which turned out to be replete with falsehood"' (italics added). See *Guardian Unlimited*, (www.guardian.co.uk/usa/story/0,12271,1200412,0.html), accessed, April 22, 2004.

casualties.⁵⁴ The Al Jazeera anchor then says that he was not going into that discussion, but asked "what about" the scenes that were seen, the evidence of the 'eyes' so to speak? How can that be false? Kimmit's answer is instructive. The exchange, as reported on CNN.com, goes like this:⁵⁵

"I know that your reporter may have confirmed it to you. But that's what your correspondents have been doing for the last few days, repeating and confirming lies," Kimmitt said.

"I can indulge in a conversation with you which might turn ugly because the pictures confirm what our correspondents are reporting out of Iraq," Azhar responded.

Kimmitt ceded nothing. "Here, I'd like to use a popular Hollywood expression: that cameras often lie."

The 'visible' is thus produced and oriented to, at one and the same time, as powerful and deficient: it is the 'local', the 'immediate', the 'surface' which can hide significant connections and histories.

In Kimmitt's assertion, of course, there is a collapse of a whole trajectory for which such a conclusion or judgment can be made: and that is *the course of production of the scene* and thus of the image. When the 'camera lies', Hollywood style or otherwise, it is not because what we see

happening on the screen is not happening at *some* level of description: a man kissing a woman, a car crashing into another, one boy punching another, bodies lying motionless on the ground with red stained clothing: it is the second order description grounded in that which may be problematic. This is itself a situated matter, whose 'problematicity' is itself accomplished, as in Kimmitt's statement. Here what might come to mind is the classic semiological argument that the interpretations of a scene (or image) can be multiple or, as in Barthes words (1977), that the image is always "polysemous". But this would be misconstruing the problem.⁵⁶

The 'fit' between what is 'seen' and what is 'real' is the problem here, in the exchange between Kimmitt and the Al Jazeera anchor. The more general fit between the 'seen' and the 'real' is, of course, increasingly accountable, increasingly questioned, in the age of digital technology. But that is an issue raised only in particular kinds of situations and circumstances, again those in which a contestation is being made for some purpose at hand. They are not routinely raised for any 'screened' or 'broadcast' scene. 'Screen' activities, those scenes mediated through visual-photographic technologies, are treated and understood as a distinct form of practice. In actuality the man is kissing the woman: in reality it is not a *naturally produced* kiss. It is an

⁵⁴ The actual interview (which I actually watched at the time it was broadcast) was reported on CNN.com and took place on April 13th 2004. The CNN news text which reported it was accessed on April 17, 2005 at <http://www.cnn.com/2004/WORLD/meast/04/13/coalition.news/>

⁵⁵ The exchange as reported on the CNN site does not correspond *exactly* with the wording of the exchange as I watched it (and as I paraphrase it here). Yet, for the purposes of this analysis on the issue of the 'seen'/scene in televisual reporting, versus the official assertions by the US spokesman (specifically Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmit), it is more than adequate. Here, of course, the issue of 'translation', both *linguistic and practical* emerges again as of analytic interest. For a discussion of what I called "the practical translation problem", see Jayyusi (1984, chapter 3)

⁵⁶ See my critique of this notion in Jayyusi (1993b). There is also a difference between the logic of talking of the 'image', and the logic of talking about a 'scene'. Television news watchers will often speak of themselves as having seen the *scenes* of various events on television (e.g. Hurricane Katrina; the flooding of New Orleans, etc.) rather than seeing *images* of it. More usually, the term 'image/s' as used in connection with filmed real events is situated in particular kinds of contexts and interactional/discursive moves post fact to the seeing, to the moment of the 'scene'. It is routinely so used in addressing, or paying attention to the work of making these scenes available: to the work of *framing* itself. The two concepts ('scene' and 'image') are not situationally interchangeable.

'act'.⁵⁷ In other words, the 'screen kiss' is not a naturally occurring kiss as one seen in driving past a park bench, nor is the accident like a car accident encountered while actually travelling on the road. The screen events are not like the worldly ones which occurred from within the ongoing endogenously unfolding course of activities, from within a local order, and emerged from that as contingencies, *accountable* to the members and parties to the setting, and even to those who may be outside the immediate setting (friends, relatives, authorities): that is what a naturally occurring 'event' would be. In the case of the Hollywood image, the particulars of the scene are not *naturally occurring* particulars, but manufactured ones, so that the 'seen' event is not endogenously embedded in an intentional course of actions of the participants that *are independent of their 'scenic' character*; i.e. they have no endogenous *extra-scenic history* (which would mean that to some degree they are only contingently so produced and see-able). Rather, as 'kiss' or 'accident' they are a *show*, not an outcome of a process of natural development which has internal integrity. In the case of the screen kiss or the screen accident, the naturally occurring event is not the kiss or the accident but the 'show': the *filmic production of them*, so that, in fact, the 'frame' and the work of 'framing' and producing the frame is itself a feature of the naturally occurring event within the world of 'work', and the activity/event

⁵⁷ It is perhaps interesting here that the same term is used for a naturally produced action, *and* the behaviour which seeks only to present itself as that, which has the surface of the naturally produced, but none of its endogenous moral-epistemic features – of sincerity, intention, actual orientation to the interlocutor/co-agent as opposed to orientation to a third party who is an observer. In Arabic, the nominal term for the latter (the pretence or make believe) is 'tamtheel' which is the same as the nominal for the act of representation (in both the symbolic and political senses) and derives from the verb 'mathaala'. Again an interesting semantic root, since it indexes a relationship between the word for the make-believe action with the word which refers to the action of 'embodying' or 're-presenting' an idea, a 'meaning', or even a political constituency.

there is the doing/acting/shooting of the kiss/accident. The features of a naturally-occurring action would include an organization of intentionality attributable *endogenously* to the actors (as independent, and possessing 'integrity') and embodied in the outcome. They thus involve an attribution of orientations, tasks at hand and prospective-retrospective considerations that are embedded in the endogenous organization of the activity *as such*, where a relevant yet independent course of action will continue to unfold after we turn our eyes away, or move on from the scene. In the celluloid image of the film-maker, the organization of intentionality, prospective-retrospective task orientation and so on is not attributable independently and with 'integrity' to the parties *within the scene as seen* and observed, but (conjointly with them) to parties *outside it* who have 'organized' the scene, with props, set up, (and will continue to do later with the 'cutting'). The endogenous course of activity is not the kissing or the punching but the 'playing of that part'; whose naturally occurring condition is not to lie in the road, but to 'play the part of one who lies 'bleeding in the road'. In the performing of the celluloid kiss (and it is performance rather than action), there is an orientation to its appearance to the 3rd party who will view this. It is not emergent from the natural course of personal life activities as relevant to this outcome (relationships and attractions; or driving skills), but is a feature of the routines of 'work'. These *are different 'forms of life'*, or larger forms/courses of activity we are talking of.⁵⁸ The screen 'kiss' or 'accident' is a sequence within the course of *work*, and it is that work which is a naturally-

⁵⁸ The screen kiss is also *unlike* real-worldly pretences, deceptions, and charades, which themselves have a function in the flux of mundane naturally occurring real-worldly courses of activity and orientation, and trade on the assumption of 'sincerity' and reciprocity of perspectives in the course of interaction, as I indicate elsewhere (Jayyusi 1991, p. 239).

occurring set of sequences within the course of everyday life.

The charge, implicit in Kimmitt's utterance then, is that Al Jazeera has somehow actively 'manufactured' the images. Put another way, for Kimmitt's utterance to be treated as relevant, and to be treated as a candidate for a successful claim to 'truth', the images at issue shown on Al Jazeera, would have to be treated as deliberately manufactured, or at least deliberately managed or manipulated in such a way as to produce the effect of the 'real', or in other words to 'simulate' the real.⁵⁹

In both positions, Al Jazeera's and Kimmitt's, we note an orientation to the following:

- 1) The (irremediable) indexicality of seen particulars, and therefore of scenes
- 2) That in the normal course of practical life, 'scenes' can nevertheless speak themselves. They are intelligible, not only in what particulars are organized within them, but also in terms of what they can make knowable and probable about prior courses of activity and probable trajectories of event that configured themselves *in and as these very particulars*. In other words, they speak themselves, are understood, not merely in terms of what there is before our eyes, but also in terms of a knowable and, reflexively yet contingently known, order of production of which this is its unfolding 'moment', an outcome, a presence before our eyes.
- 3) The moral organization of vision, the *moral implicativeness* of what is seen.

In other words, the indexicality of 'scenes' and the organization of particulars within them, of what is 'seen' is of two logical orders: on one level it 'tells' of the order of

production, stands in for it, points to it, and to a course of activity that produced this particular. It tells of a course of actions that is mostly unavailable and has to be retrieved in various ways, but that can legitimately, intelligibly and accountably be retrieved and reconstructed from *this* scene: retrievability begins with the scene before our eyes. At the same time, the scene constitutes a moral index: tells of a moral order present in all particulars, and indexes a particular moral profile for parties to the scene, or deemed involved in its production in some way. It has an interpretable and significant moral intelligibility.

In this sense, scenes are not merely docile sites, waiting to be interpreted; rather they present themselves as already constituted and constitutable in moral and organizational terms, *even if defeasibly so*, terms which are predicated on our knowledge in common of the social world, of categories of persons, actions and events, and the very ways these can unfold into settings, scenes, and trajectories of engagement. (see Jayyusi 1988 and 1993b).

Having said that, I wish to shift a little to inquiring into another dimension of the 'seen' and the scenic", one that is integral to its character within the courses of our everyday actions and interactions, within the intelligibility of the moral order, and one that, in fact, has been perhaps at the heart of some of the issues of the coverage of the war. That is that *the potency of the visual, the scenic, has to do with the place of corporeality* in the conduct, intelligibility and moral constitution of social life. What a scene is, after all, is an organization, a particular deployment of objects, spaces and bodies, and it is this particular deployment which is the locus of the possible moral 'emplotment' which we *may*, in occasioned ways, give to the body of scenes we see, or the 'body' of particulars composed in and as a scene. Not all scenes are of course so emplotted: ordinary street scenes are not, or are at

⁵⁹ For this notion see both Baudrillard and Bjelić (1999) on him.

least, very thinly emplotted: we see people going shopping, working, talking to each other, crossing roads, taking cabs, and so on. The street scene is a particular conjuncture of various trajectories of action that are co-located and cross-cut and traverse each other's ambient space, but which are not in an endogenous relationship to each other; rather they are in a tangential, contingent and happenstance relationship – note here the 'ironies' that this can produce, which are sometimes exploited in various narratives.⁶⁰ But *other* scenes may have **emplottable visibilities**, a locus of significance within them: the scene of an accident, of a battle, in a hospital emergency room, a woman giving birth at a checkpoint.⁶¹ And their visibility and intelligibility is also embedded in, and productive of, our sense and knowledge of social structures.

Scenes are given their sense through the particular deployment of corporeal elements evident within them: without corporeality, embodiment, we would not have visual sense. And whilst it is the case, as I have argued elsewhere (Jayyusi 1988) that we only see through the categories given us in our language practices and our cultural knowledge of the world, a praxis which is at the heart of our moral understanding of scenes that unfold before

⁶⁰ One story, for example, that I have heard retold again and again is of the man in a panic to get to his severely injured son in a country hospital, during a storm: he hijacks a car from a man at the petrol station, who later turns out to have been the urgently awaited surgeon needed to operate on the son. The surgeon arrives too late, and the son dies. I heard this recounted variously as the plot of a film, a report read in a newspaper, a narrative published in a magazine. Whatever the origins of such a story, its *telling* is precisely an index of the orientation to the appearance of street scenes as contingent conjunctures of non-related trajectories: the irony turns on this.

⁶¹ This latter example is one so often mentioned in accounts of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, (news reports, letters, accounts on web-sites) as a telling and scenic *index* of the repressive mechanisms used against the Palestinian population there.

us, it nevertheless remains a truism to say that scenes are at the same time composed irremediably of the corporeal, a truism which I am proposing as nevertheless very important, and one which needs to be made central to the project of understanding the visual.

That is the hub of all the discourses, and all the contestations over Iraq, Palestine, 9/11, and Afghanistan. If we look closely, all the issues over which views divide and argumentation is mounted, and in which appeals are made to social structures or legal rubrics, practical decisions turn on matters that have to do, *primarily* or *ultimately*, with the fate, the dispensation, the consequences and risks for particular persons and groups in their *bodied and lived trajectories*, their embodied experience. The body has been and remains the primary and fundamental locus of the moral and the ethical: it is its dispositions, injuries, privations, doings and impact on others (other sensate/mindful bodies) that remains at the heart of moral order. To navigate our way through moral discourses, the moral organization of activities and understanding of events, through the various paths and tracks of moral discourse and moral argumentation, yet keep this issue as though it were simply part of a context *exterior* to the organization of our activities, will inevitably become problematic at some analytic levels.

In the US science fiction series *Star trek*, one episode was set in a world of creatures who had evolved so much that they had outgrown the body and become pure spirit.⁶² Their role in the episode is to guide the humans, which included members of the *Star Ship Enterprise*, through their conflicts and arguments, over power, territory, relationships to the other

⁶² The episode I am referring to here was part of the original series, 1966-69, with William Shatner as Captain Kirk. I draw here on science fiction because this is a genre of fiction in which one can find potent explorations of the limits of what constitutes the 'human' and/or the 'intelligible'.

sex, and so on. They themselves, as they declared, no longer underwent conflict, and so could guide the others from, what was in that event, an *Archimedean vantage point*: but they had also lost many of the pleasures of living even as they enjoyed the tranquillity of pure spirit. What this episode provides for is precisely the centrality of the body in our practices, language games, forms of life, discourses and interactions: in short intelligibilities of the life world. The body, socially constructed, culturally striated and formed, is nevertheless, the hub of a *corporeal phenomenology* located and locatable as the grounds and horizon of moral conflict, moral negotiability and therefore of moral intelligibility.

What this suggests is that without bodies and the objects that constitute the corporeal body of the settings of the life world, no ground for the specifically moral would exist: there would be no issue of order. This may be a statement which, once made, is immediately visible as obvious. Yet it has a significance for the ways we need to pursue at least *some* tracks of analysis. The organization and logic of materiality within our practices, forms of life, understandings and trajectories needs to be detailed and investigated. The social constitution of materiality as well as the corporeal embeddedness of sociality and interactivity needs be given its proper site within our analytic.⁶³ Human activity and the social world (and its methods) are constituted, at their limits, by the material and the corporeal: these provide the liminalities of social being and 'practical intelligibility'. *And what is the material but the course of the consequence in the individual, idiographic, located, situated and lived trajectory?* A body count; a destroyed house; loss of income; the

fatality of Aids infection; the sparse meal; the broken up family, and so on.

If we look back at the disputed Al Jazeera coverage, and the statements made by Rumsfeld and Kimmit, we can note that although it is about the issue of what is shown versus what is to be believed, that issue itself turns on the deep moral implicativeness of what is 'shown' in itself: of people, women and children, dead and dying, bleeding in hospitals, being buried, grieving relatives. It turns, in other words, on the corporeal consequences of courses of action, for actual people. And these consequences now take on an indexicality of their own, a moral indexicality, a moral implicativeness: they index some kind of action and condition which is open to negative judgement, morally illegitimate, by common standards of contemporary moral discourse (which may, of course, not necessarily be shared in or acceded to, by all people in all times and contexts). In other words, over and above the indexicality of such scenes for what produced them, they are seen and encountered as corporeal events, which index some moral culpability on the part of some, of one of the parties to the setting, whether known at that moment or not: they are encountered and engageable *as moral sites in and of themselves*. The power of the 'visible' is, in part, locatable in this.

It is exactly in this context that media reports may be located, judged, commented on, denounced, controlled and or otherwise engaged. In that the courses of production of many conditions and particulars in the world are not available first hand, the telling of them, their explanation, and accounting itself becomes accountable, judgeable, implicative, and imbricated with standards of competence, morality, and 'rightness'. (See Jayyusi 1984, esp. chapter morality and rationality in my book).

The boundaries and bounds of rationality, corporeality and of moral order are intertwined. The socio-logic of knowledge

⁶³ The issue of the sociality-materiality complex (too often treated as a duality), and ways of re-specifying it, has increasingly been a subject of recent inquiry. See, for example, the special issue on this theme in *Theory, Culture & Society* 2002 (SAGE, London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi), Vol. 19(5/6): 261–270.

and moral order are mutually embedded – and they are praxio-logically co-located within the visible courses of actions and interaction and their accountable corporeal outcomes and consequentialities. They are so at the level of both individual and historical accounting.

References

- Agamben, Giorgio (1998). *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford/California: Stanford University Press.
- Barthes, Roland (1977). *Image-Music-Text*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Bjelić, Dušan I. (1999). ““Frenching” the “Real” and praxeological therapy: an ethnomethodological clarification of the new French theory of the media’. In: Paul L. Jalbert (Ed.), *Media Studies: Ethnomethodological Approaches*. Lanham, New York, Oxford: University Press of America, 231-57.
- Coulter, Jeff (1975). "Perceptual Accounts and Interpretive Asymmetries". *Sociology*, Vol. 9, No. 3, September.
- Coulter, Jeff (1979) "Beliefs and Practical Understanding". In George Psathas (Ed.), *Everyday Language*. N.Y.: Irvington Press.
- D'Arcy, Eric (1963). *Human Acts: An Essay in Their Moral Evaluation*. Clarendon Press.
- Dretske, Fred (1977). "Referring to Events". In: Peter A. French, Theodore E. Uehling, Jr. and Howard K. Wettstein (Eds.), *Contemporary Perspectives in the Philosophy of Language*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Eglin, Peter (1979). "Resolving Reality Disjunctures on Telegraph Avenue: A Study of Practical Reasoning". *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 4 (4), 359-377.
- Garfinkel, Harold (1963). "A Conception of, and Experiments with, 'Trust' as a Condition of Stable Concerted Actions". In: O. J. Harvey (Ed.), *Motivation and Social Interaction*. New York: Ronald Press, 187-238.
- Garfinkel, Harold (1967). *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.
- Geddie, William (Ed.) (1959). *Chamber's Twentieth Century Dictionary*. London/UK: W.R. Chambers Ltd.
- Habermas, Jürgen (1979). *Communication and the Evolution of Society*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Jalbert, Paul L. (Ed.) (1999). *Media Studies: Ethnomethodological Approaches*. Lanham, New York, Oxford: University Press of America and the International Institute for Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis. [Studies in Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis No. 5]
- Jayyusi, Lena (1984). *Categorization and the Moral Order*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Jayyusi, Lena (1988). "Towards a Socio-Logic of the Film Text". *Semiotica* 68 (3/4), 271-296.
- Jayyusi, Lena (1991). "Values and moral judgment: communicative praxis as moral order". In: George Button (Ed.), *Ethnomethodology and the Human Sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 227-51.
- Jayyusi, Lena (1993a). "Premeditation and Happenstance: The Social Construction of intention, action and knowledge". *Human Studies* 16, 435-454.
- Jayyusi, Lena (1993b). "The reflexive nexus: Photo-practice and natural history". *Continuum* 6(2), 25-52. Available at:

[<http://www.mcc.murdoch.edu.au/ReadingRoom/6.2/Jayyusi.html>]

Jayyusi, Lena (2007). "Iterability, Cumulativity and Presence: The Relational Figures of Palestinian Memory". In: Ahmad Sa'di and Lila Abu-Lughod (Eds.), *Nakba, Palestine 1948: The Claims of Memory*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Nekvapil, Jiří and Leudar, Ivan (2002). "On dialogical networks: Arguments about the migration law in Czech mass media in 1993". In: Stephen Hester and William Housley (Eds.), *Language, Interaction and National Identity*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 60-101.

Origgi, Gloria (2004). "Is Trust an Epistemological Notion?" *Episteme*, June.

Philo, Greg and Berry, Mike (Glasgow University Media Group) (2004). *Bad News from Israel*. Pluto Press.

Pollner, Melvin (1975). "The Very Coinage of Your Brain': The Anatomy of Reality Disjunctures". *Philosophy of The Social Sciences* 5, 411-430.

Sacks, Harvey (1974). "On the Analyzability of Stories by Children". In: Roy Turner (Ed.), *Ethnomethodology*. Penguin Education, 216-232.

Shapin, Steven (1994). *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Tuchman, Gaye (1978). *Making News*. New York: The Free Press.

White, Hayden (1973). *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Winch, Peter (1972). *Ethics and Action*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Wittgenstein, L. (1974). *On Certainty*. Edited by G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright. Translated by Denis Paul and G.E.M. Anscombe. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

The War on Terror and Muslim Britons' Safety: A Week in the Life of a Dialogical Network

Ivan Leudar

The University of Manchester, U.K. (Ivan.leudar@manchester.ac.uk)

Jiří Nekvapil

Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic
(jiri.nekvapil@ff.cuni.cz)

Introduction

There is a growing body of academic work analysing presentations of the attacks on the USA on 9/11/2001 and their consequences. This includes recent special issues of *Discourse and Society* (2004, vol. 15, No. 2&3) and *Journal of Language and Politics* (2005, vol. 4, No. 1), Lincoln (2003), Chilton (2004, chapters 9, 10) and Hodges and Nilep (2007). One shortcoming in much of this excellent work is that it adopts a western perspective: as a matter of routine the corpus used gives voice to some participants in the hostilities rather than others. This is apparent even in explicitly politically aligned and critical work such as Richardson's (2004) book on misrepresenting Islam. No analysis can, of course be 'transcendental' - each has grounding, perspective and a purpose. Yet, if the aim is not just to subject a particular text to a formal analysis, using it as 'evidence', but to make visible the links between texts so as to grasp the conflict, analysts need to aim at a practically accomplishable completeness of the corpus. We had this problem in mind when analysing presentations of Roma in Czech media (Leudar and Nekvapil, 2000, Nekvapil and Leudar, 2003). We made some effort to include in our materials not just the pieces *about* Roma but also the admittedly rare public events in which Roma participated. Using such a corpus we demonstrated that representations of Roma are contested, with the Czechs' rejections of Roma not simply reflecting fixed stereotypes but contingent on specific social activities. In our recent paper (Leudar, Marsland and Nekvapil, 2004),

we analysed the affinities in presentations of the attacks in George Bush's addresses to the nation, statements to the British House of Commons by Tony Blair (and the ensuing debate) and statements by Osama bin Laden's broadcast on Al Jazeera Television. Bush, Blair, and Bin Laden used 'us/them' minimal category pairs with the distinction between 'us' and 'them' drawn in different but contrasted and hence connected terms, distinguishing 'us' from 'them' in secular and religious terms, respectively. The two pairs of categories, glossable respectively as 'defenders of civilisation'/'terrorists' and 'defenders of Islam'/'infidel crusaders' were not independent. They were coordinated through their common incumbency - any participant in the 'war on terror' has a double and contrastive identity, each version grounded in competing perspectives on that conflict. Bin Laden is an incumbent of the category 'us' as he formulates it - he is 'a defender of Islam'. He is, however, also one of 'them' as that category is formulated by Bush/Blair - he is 'a terrorist'. The same goes for his enemy: President Bush is one of 'us' - a defender of freedom and democracy but also one of 'them' - a crusader attacking Islam.

The representations of the parties to the conflict were, however, not simply coordinated referentially, through the obviously common incumbency of competing categories. The two 'us/them' membership category pairs were *joined* in their mutual opposition, grounded in the enemies' formulations of the conflict - the war between civilisation and barbarism on the one hand, and the religious war against

the infidels, the enemies of Islam, on the other. The contrary formulations of the conflict were not just words, they were consequential: they provided moral justifications for violence and served to recruit allies.

Our analysis revealed that the enemies' statements were dialogically networked, as was revealed by the coordination of their membership category work. One interesting commonality between Bush and Blair's arguments in the days following 9/11 was their systematic and public effort to take religion out of the conflict. Yet there was a subtle difference between them which we did not focus on at the time. Blair narrated the events so as to minimise the backlash against the Muslim community, especially in the United Kingdom whilst Bush did not evidence such concern. In fact, according to Lincoln, his statements employed Old Testament derived references and indicated to his radical Christian allies that the conflict was a war between religions (Lincoln, 2003). In this paper we further develop our analysis of how, through membership categorisation, Blair and the representatives of the Muslim community in the UK managed in public-view the relationship between Islam and the terrorism. We extend the corpus used in Leudar, Marsland and Nekvapil (2004) to include additional Muslim parties, thus obtaining a more complete view of the happenings.

Before we proceed to do this, however, we first spell out the way we do the analysis. We analyse 'discourse' but we do not aim to isolate invariants, that is de-situated discursive structures or strategies or devices, nor do we read texts through the forms discovered by other analysts even though this may be occasionally helpful. Some ways of studying practices of membership categorising (i.e. how categories of people and their activities are composed and used) border on formal semantics (e.g. Jalbert and David, this issue). Unremarkably in

ethnomethodology, our analysis is, however, of participants' practical reasoning in and about happenings, with the aim of making such reasoning, its grounds and consequentiality, clear. The aim of Leudar, Marsland and Nekvapil (2004), and of this paper, is to make visible the links between the reasoning of those involved in violent conflicts – the allies, the enemies and those caught in between – working towards an account of how such links are accomplished without necessarily engaging in face to face interactions. Our analytic 'routine' has four logical characteristics. First, since argumentation in the political domain tends to be partisan, it is at least membership 'category indicative' (i.e. category incumbency can be allocated on the grounds of how a person argues), possibly 'category transformative' (a category can be transformed on noting how its incumbents typically argue) and even 'category constitutive' (arguing in a particular manner may not be incidental to a category but essential). We therefore always pay attention to how membership categories are managed and are concerned with both category maintenance and change. Second, the reasoning in and about conflict is not a disinterested meditation but lays the ground for future violence and moralizes past violence. As Sacks (1992) commented, membership categorizations are consequential; they provide moral grounds on which to speak and act (cf. Edwards, 1997). Third, practical reasoning is occasioned – even an argument that is a recognizable repeat still has to be performed somewhere and so is never quite like what others argued elsewhere or how they did so. The fourth and crucial aspect of our method involves putting 'an utterance' in an appropriate setting. Levinson, following Goffman, noted some time ago that participants may be situated in interactions as overhearers, this providing them with limited rights to contribute (Levinson, 1988). Media audiences are sometimes thought of as overhearers, but Greatbatch (1992), analysing turn-taking in studio debates,

noted that participants in the studio do not position viewers/listeners as 'eavesdroppers' on their private exchanges but rather as 'primary addressees'. We observed in addition, that politicians participating in TV debates may *address* their remarks to *specific* parties not in the studio, and occasionally get a response (Leudar, 1995). These physically absent parties are obviously more than 'overhearers', and more than members of a grouped audience. The setting of political talk is typically broader than the immediate sequential context (which is of course essential).

Our analysis then crucially involves setting an activity into a progressively broader flow of happenings thus gradually revealing its meaning (cf. Anscombe, 1959; Sharrock and Leudar, 2003). This analysis in turn draws on the work of John Austin who commented that the identity of an action is to be sought not in psychological depths (i.e. by inferring or even just attributing cognitions to individuals) but instead by providing a progressively 'thicker' description of activities (Austin, 1970, chapters 7 and 9; cf. Leudar and Costall, 2004). The analytic problem is to bring together happenings that are mutually relevant for those who participate in them (this is what used to be in Pragmatics 'the context selection problem'). To accomplish this we have formulated the conception of 'dialogical network' (see, e.g., Leudar and Nekvapil, 1998; Nekvapil and Leudar, 1998; Leudar and Nekvapil, 2004). We are concerned with two contingent issues. First, we demonstrate that dialogical networks *are distributed* in face-to-face interactions and media discourse and have some unique properties. Second, we are concerned with the *local* work that is required to initiate a network, or orient and contribute to an existing one. The relevance of an 'exophoric' setting is locally indicated by addressivity markers in talk or a text. These may include explicitly addressing absent parties and referring to other dialogical events, as well as oblique textual

and argument affinities. The relevance can, however, also be a matter of the subsequent uptake, where two initially apparently unconnected spatially and temporarily separate dialogical happenings are grouped together in talk of a third party - maybe a politician or a journalist - and so made mutually relevant for others. The local conversation with all it entails is absolutely necessary for the emergence of a dialogical network, but not just in one place and at one time, but in several, maybe many places and the network is distributed over these.

Analysis

We shall analyze and inter-relate the following texts.

1. the record of a Downing Street press conference on 11th of September 2001;
2. a press release by the Muslim Council of Britain on 11th of September 2001;
3. a record of a Downing Street press conference on 12th September 2001;
4. *The Guardian* report on 12th September 2001;
5. a press release by the Muslim Council of Britain on 13th of September 2001;
6. a Hansard record of Anthony Blair addressing the House of Commons on 14th September 2001;
7. The contributions on 14th September 2001 of Khalid Mahmood and Mohammad Sarwar to the debate in the House of Commons following (6);
8. a press release by the Muslim Council of Britain on 18th of September 2001; and
9. An editorial in the *Muslim News* on 28th of September 2001

On 11th of September 2001, the British Prime Minister issued the following statement.

(1) A. Blair, Downing Street, 11/09/01 ⁶⁴

1. The full horror of what has happened
2. in the United States earlier today is
3. now becoming clearer. It is hard even
4. to contemplate the utter carnage and
5. terror which has engulfed so many
6. innocent people. We've offered
7. President Bush and the American
8. people our solidarity, our profound
9. sympathy, and our prayers.
10. ((20 lines omitted))
11. As for those that carried out these
12. attacks, there are no adequate words of
13. condemnation. Their barbarism will
14. stand as their shame for all eternity.
15. As I said earlier, this mass terrorism is
16. the new evil in our world. The people
17. who perpetrate it have no regard
18. whatever for the sanctity or value of
19. human life, and we the democracies of
20. the world, must come together to
21. defeat it and eradicate it. This is not a
22. battle between the United States of
23. America and terrorism, but between
24. the free and democratic world and
25. terrorism. We, therefore, here in
26. Britain stand shoulder to shoulder
27. with our American friends in this hour
28. of tragedy, and we, like them, will not
29. rest until this evil is driven from our
30. world.

Blair contrasts two versions of the conflict: *USA vs. terrorism* and '*free and democratic world*' vs. *terrorism*, opting for the second view. As we have shown elsewhere (Leudar, Marsland and Nekvapil, 2004), this formulation is designed to make religion irrelevant to the conflict, since the 'free democratic world' includes secular societies and those with diverse religions (including Islam which has as much regard for the sanctity or value of human life as Christianity does). The notable aspect of (1) is, however, that Blair is offering 'prayers' and using words with religious connotations ('evil' and 'sanctity'). The use of these words by itself of course does not necessarily make one accountably religious, or specifically a Christian. Their use is however indexical – here against the background knowledge

that Blair is a practicing Christian. Using the words with this contingency makes his Christianity notable and relevant in situ. The use of these words is unlikely to be accidental – the statement is not an improvised, spontaneous or an emotional piece – it is prepared, and most likely not just by Blair himself.⁶⁵ Moreover, he is not talking *about* the 'free and democratic world'; rather in speaking from Downing Street he *represents* that world. His religious status is not just a matter for his individual consciousness but a possible category-bound characteristic of the defenders of the 'free and democratic world'.

It is arguable that if those defenders are Christians, then the terrorists are likely to be Muslims. Why? Using one member of 'minimal category pair' in the right setting invokes the other member (cf. Sacks, 1992) and 'Christian'/'Muslim' pair is salient. That pair has been explicitly invoked by bin Laden and denied by Blair and Bush (see Leudar, Marsland, Nekvapil 2004). Blair is, however, not a Christian all of the time - his social identity is normally carefully managed and contingent on settings. So why is he a Christian now? One possibility is that like Bush's, Blair's speeches indicate to some that his understanding of the attacks is religious. Chilton (2004) remarked that "in some western states politicians have to take account of religious sensibilities, both in the negative direction of not *offending* any religious group and in the positive direction of *favoring* (maybe despite appearances) some particular group" (ibid, p. 175). The expression 'sanctity' or 'value of human life' indeed joins two different understandings – religious and secular - and could have been *designed* for a dual audience.⁶⁶ To understand the design of

⁶⁴ <http://www.number-10.gov.uk/output/Page1596.asp>

⁶⁵ Levinson's (1988) analysis of White House tapes and Lynch and Bogen's (1996) of Contra affair make visible cooperative nature of political speech construction.

⁶⁶ On designing political speeches for multiple addressees see Kühn (1995).

the statement, however, we have to relate it to how it was taken up elsewhere.

It is more likely that Blair is squaring two, at first sight contrary, requirements. One is the need to take the religion out of what will become the 'war on terror'; this in order to secure allies in the Muslim world.⁶⁷ The second is to allow these allies to support the 'war on terror' in their own (religious) registers. The rhetorical power of having Muslims, speaking as Muslims, rejecting the violence carried out in the name of Islam is obvious. Speaking as a Christian may carry the danger of indicating that the conflict is between Christians and Muslims but it also sets the precedent for the Muslim allies to condemn the attacks as Muslims. The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) fills the niche.

(2) Muslim Council of Britain 11/09/01

1. 11th September 2001
2. MCB expresses total
3. condemnation of terrorist attacks
4. British Muslims, along with
5. everyone else, are watching events
6. in America with shock and horror.
7. Whoever is responsible for these
8. dreadful, wanton attacks, we
9. condemn them utterly. These are
10. senseless and evil acts that appal
11. all people of conscience. The
12. MCB stands shoulder to shoulder
13. with remarks made by our Prime
14. Minister Tony Blair. Our thoughts
15. and prayers are with all the
16. innocent victims, their families
17. and communities. We convey our
18. deepest sympathies to President
19. Bush and the people of America.
20. No cause can justify this carnage.
21. We hope those responsible will
22. swiftly be brought to justice for
23. their unconscionable deeds. As the
24. British Muslims come to the full
25. realisation of these most awful
26. events, which they condemn
27. wholeheartedly, they too are
28. beginning to feel a huge sense of

29. fear. Terror makes victims of us
30. all, it is beyond reason. Terror on
31. this scale must not be compounded
32. by knee-jerk reactions that would
33. make victims of other innocent
34. peoples of the world. This would
35. only add to the devastation caused.

The statement does not stand alone. The MCB, speaking for British Muslims, does not just condemn the attacks, it does so 'along with everyone else'. Blair, representing the Great Britain, 'stood shoulder to shoulder' with the 'American friends' (extract 1, line 26-27); MCB stands 'shoulder to shoulder' *with remarks* of Tony Blair (extract 2, lines 12-14). (The alliance has limits.) Not knowing the perpetrators is also significant – denying privileged knowledge sets British Muslims apart from the attackers. The statement thus attends first to the participant position of the MCB and does this, so to speak performatively, by acting in spirit. MCB is joining the dialogical network initiated by Blair's calling for allies in the 'war on terror'. The MCB statement *endorses* Blair's formulation of the conflict (a dialogical connection) without specifying exactly which remarks it responds to. This is common in dialogical networks – remarks are grouped together and responded to jointly rather than individually. There are some obvious textual affinities between the statements (1) and (2). Both represent the attacks in *similar* terms ('horror', 'carnage'), both *offer* 'sympathy' and 'prayers'. Analysing the links between Bush and Blair's statements we observed that Blair did not simply reproduce Bush's statement, he amplified it in certain respects (Leudar, Marsland and Nekvapil, 2004) Blair's assessment of the events is likewise somewhat amplified in the MCB statement – 'horror' for instance becomes 'shock and horror'; and attacks are described as 'dreadful wanton destruction'.

The MCB statement, however, does not simply echo and amplify Blair's formulations. It positions Muslims as victims - these victims cannot be treated as perpetrators, and the 'war on terror' cannot

⁶⁷ Chomsky (2001) notes the terms used by Bush to denote actions following 9/11, and points out the assets of the vague designation 'war'.

simply be a conflict between Christianity and Islam (as Osama bin Laden claims.) The MCB statement also warns against ‘knee jerk reactions’. The victims of these are not specified, but they obviously include Muslims in the UK whom the MCB represents. The MCB statement then does two things in the dialogical network. It *fulfils* Blair’s argument that the conflict is not between Islam and Christianity. Second, from the position of an ally, the MCB works to defend Muslims in the UK and elsewhere.

The design of Blair’s statement then only becomes obvious as the dialogical network unfolds. He defines the 9/11 attacks and their perpetrators so as to allow Muslims into an alliance; once they are in, he uses their voices to continue to dissociate religion from the conflict. The lesson for the analyst is that one can only properly understand political statements by noting their uptake elsewhere; in our terms understanding them in a dialogical network.

Blair used the MCB statement in a press conference at 10 Downing Street the next day.

(3) Press conference, Downing Street, 12/09/01 ⁶⁸

1. Blair statement
2. ((28 lines omitted))
3. ... the world now knows the full evil
4. and capability of international
5. terrorism which menaces the whole of
6. the democratic world. The terrorists
7. responsible have no sense of
8. humanity, of mercy, or of justice. To
9. commit acts of this nature requires a
10. fanaticism and wickedness that is
11. beyond our normal contemplation.
12. The USA will be considering the
13. action it considers appropriate against
14. those found to be responsible. But
15. beyond that, there are issues
16. connected with such terrorism that the
17. international community as a whole
18. must consider: where these groups are,

19. how they operate, how they are
20. financed, how they are supported, and
21. how they are stopped. One final point.
22. I was pleased to see the very strong
23. statement of condemnation from the
24. British Muslim Council, echoing that
25. of the American Muslim Council. As
26. Muslim leaders and clerics around the
27. world are making clear, such acts of
28. infamy and cruelty are wholly
29. contrary to the Islamic faith. The vast
30. majority of Muslims are decent,
31. upright people who share our horror at
32. what has happened. People of all
33. faiths and all democratic political
34. persuasions have a common cause: to
35. identify this machinery of terror and to
36. dismantle it as swiftly as possible.
37. With our American friends, and other
38. allies around the world, this is the task
39. to which we now turn.

The alliance is now explicitly opened to ‘people of all faiths’ and Blair stresses the variety of its membership – of political systems (he says not ‘democratic persuasion’ but ‘*persuasions*’) and of mode of religious faith (‘all faiths’). The actual *presence* in the alliance of Muslims is demonstrated by the statement of the MCB, which Blair makes relevant. Note, though, a small discrepancy. The MCB, representing British Muslims, rejected the attacks along with everyone else and ‘standing shoulder to shoulder’ with Blair. Blair, however, presents it as a spontaneous reaction to the 9/11 attacks and groups it with the like reaction by the American Muslim Council (line 25), and then attributing it to Muslim leaders and clerics in general (contrast extract 2, lines 11-14 and extract 3, lines 26, 27). He is, moreover, not just talking about Muslims but *with* Muslim ‘leaders and clerics’ and dissociates Islam from the attacks in their voices. Blair of course does not speak just in the voice of his Muslim allies. ‘The vast majority of Muslims are decent, upright people who share our horror at what has happened’ is in his own voice, he holds this view.

Blair then takes two steps to safeguard Muslims in the UK from the backlash. One

⁶⁸ <http://www.number-10.gov.uk/output/Page1597.asp>

is to dissociate Islam from the attacks, the other is to endorse most Muslims. The former is done in the voice of his allies and has to be done in a dialogical network. The latter is done in his own voice and in principle does not require a network. Dissociating Islam from the 9/11 attacks and having Muslim representatives to condemn them might of course have other consequences than protecting Muslims from a backlash. It might, for instance, work to attenuate possible Muslim support for the attackers.

Blair's uptake of the MCB press release is, however, selective. The point the MCB made about Muslims also being direct victims of the attacks is not taken up at all (and the MCB will reiterate it, as we shall see below). The warning against the 'knee jerk reaction' is arguably taken up in lines 3-14. Saying 'The USA will be considering the action it considers appropriate against those found to be responsible.' implies that neither Blair, nor the other allies of the USA have control over what the USA will 'decide' and do (the role of the allies is to provide intelligence, information and support - extract 3, lines 12-21). In using the words 'appropriate' and 'consider' to describe the eventual reaction of the USA, Blair tacitly discounts the likelihood of a 'knee jerk reaction'. Since he, however, starts with an extreme case description of the attackers he warrants an extreme reaction by the USA, and indicates that one is to be expected.

The way Blair removes the religion from the 'war on terror' depends on the Muslim bodies publicly rejecting the attacks and Blair's arguments make sense in and are contingent on this developing dialogical network – the analytic routine has to respect this.

What is notable is that Blair and the MCB not once identified the perpetrators as Muslims or of Islam avoiding expressions such as 'Islamic terrorists' and 'Islamic fundamentalists'. The perpetrators are

instead defined by reference to their deeds. Muslims, on the other hand, are identified by their positive moral qualities. Religious understanding of the attacks and of the ensuing conflict was, however, not to be avoided for long. The first question put to Blair in the press conference on the 12/09/02 was as follows:

(4) Press conference, Downing Street, 12/09/01

1. **Q:** This is maybe one of those
2. questions, Prime Minister, you can't
3. answer but there have been official
4. and semi-official comments from the
5. United States about Osama Bin
6. Laden's group being the likely culprit
7. for this. What is the British view of
8. that, and do we have any intelligence
9. about where these attacks came
10. from?
11. **A:** I won't comment on the
12. identification of who is responsible at
13. this stage but obviously this is
14. something that is under consideration
15. by our agencies here as well as other
16. agencies round the world and
17. particularly those in the United States
18. of America. Yes, Sir.

So, the suspicion that the attacks had been carried out by Osama bin Laden's group was gaining currency and Blair's attempt to argue religion out of the 'war on terror' was challenged. The second question was as follows.

(5) Downing Street, 12/09/01

1. **Q:** Noting what you said about
2. Britain's
3. Muslims, it is nonetheless the case
4. isn't it that this international terrorism
5. over the past decade has had a
6. common thread of Islamic
7. Fundamentalism and isn't it rather
8. inadequate to try and address this
9. problem by treating it as evil
10. terrorism and (sic)⁶⁹ isolation and
11. looking at the functionalities of where
12. the money comes from without
13. looking at the basic clash of ideologies
14. and indeed the basic concept of what

⁶⁹ The word 'and' should presumably have been 'in'.

15. human rights and the value of human
16. life is?
17. A: Of course it is evil terrorism and
18. we shouldn't disguise that for a
19. moment but I think you are right in
20. saying that we also have to make it
21. clear and this is done best indeed by
22. voices within the Muslim community
23. and the Islamic faith that such acts of
24. wickedness and terrorism are wholly
25. contrary to the proper principles of
26. the Islamic faith. And one of the
27. reasons I mentioned the statement of
28. the Muslim Council of Britain was in
29. order to underscore the shock and the
30. sense of horror and sense of outrage
31. felt by the vast majority of Muslims
32. round the world. So this is not a
33. situation in which we should see this
34. as a cause between the Muslim faith
35. and the world but between terrorism
36. and the rest of the world, including the
37. Muslim faith.

The journalist tentatively accepts the dissociation of 'Britain's Muslims' from the attacks, but argues that the motivation is likely to have been 'Islamic fundamentalism', suggesting that Blair's understanding of the conflict is inadequate (it ignores the 'basic clash of ideologies', the contrary conceptions of 'human rights' and the values put on 'human life'.)⁷⁰ Blair rejects the criticism - the identity of perpetrators relevant to the 9/11 attacks is not that they are 'Muslims' but that they are 'evil terrorists.' Blair argues that such acts of terrorism are against 'proper principles of the Islamic faith' (misattributing this view to the journalist – line 19). Important for our analysis is that, as in (3), Blair supports his argument not by his own exegesis of Islam but by pointing out that the Muslim community, represented by the MCB, publicly strongly condemns the attacks as against Islam.

⁷⁰ The journalist's argument brings up an interesting point about Blair's construction of the attackers – they are defined entirely in terms of what they have done on 9/11 and then in terms of the physical and moral impact of their acts; they have almost no other 'qualities'. The journalist, on the other hand, provides a broader description which would clarify the intentions in the attacks.

Blair is not himself in a position to declare who is and who is not a proper Muslim – hence he speaks in the voices of his Muslim allies, reporting what they have said.

Events external to the press conference are thus crucial for understanding what Blair does in the press conference. The important point is that in referring to and quoting statements, Blair himself indicates which external events are relevant and hence should be included by us in the analysis.

Blair's press conference statement was referred to in many, if not all British national dailies. The Guardian reported it as follows:

(6) The Guardian, 12/09/01, 1.15pm update⁷¹

((26 lines omitted))

1. The prime minister was also quick to
2. stress that this was not a battle
3. between Islam and the west. He said
4. that such acts of terrorism were
5. "wholly contrary to the proper
6. principles of the Islamic faith". "This
7. is not a situation in which we should
8. see this as a cause between
9. the Muslim faith and the world, but
10. between terrorism and the rest of the
11. world, including the Muslim faith."

((22 lines omitted))

There are some discrepancies in what Blair said and what he was reported to have said – for instance, 'such acts of wickedness and terrorism' (extract 5, lines 23, 24) became 'such acts of terrorism', editing out the moral/religious dimension. What Blair said in counter-argument to a journalist is presented as his non-contingent view and broadcast to all and sundry and nobody in particular. This is a characteristic role of journalists in dialogical networks – they make local arguments public and redirect them. Leudar and Nekvapil (1998) noted how a relatively geographically hidden

⁷¹ See <http://www.guardian.co.uk/wtccrash/story/0,,550619,00.html>

press conference became a significant event when the elements of it were reported by journalists and brought to politicians for comment. More importantly, however, Blair's careful rhetoric seems to be lost on the Guardian journalist - the view Blair expressed using voices of Muslim 'leaders and clerics' is simply attributed to him as his own and his point that it is Muslims who are rejecting the attacks does not carry.

The second statement of the MCB again in part fulfils Blair's argument. In (3), Blair said that Muslim leaders are making it clear that such acts of infamy are 'contrary to Islamic faith' and in (7) they do just that (extract 7, lines 3-5). He declares that Muslim leaders condemn the attacks (extract 3, lines 26-29) and here they do so (extract 7, lines 11-13).

(7) Muslim Council of Britain 13/09/01

1. MCB expresses total condemnation of
2. terrorist attacks in US
3. The Holy Qur'an equates the murder
4. of one innocent person with the
5. murder of the whole of humanity.
6. We, the Muslims of Britain, wish to
7. offer our deepest sympathies to the
8. families of those who have been killed
9. or injured following the atrocities
10. committed in the United States.
11. We utterly condemn these
12. indiscriminate terrorist attacks against
13. innocent lives. The perpetrators of
14. these atrocities, regardless of their
15. religious, ideological or political
16. beliefs, stand outside the pale of
17. civilized values.

The statement subtly differentiates the MCB from the attackers. The latter are presented as being without civilised values and the MCB, by implication, is upholding these. The attackers are however not necessarily devoid of religion (lines 13-15). Their creed, ideology or politics are, however, irrelevant to, and do not excuse, the attacks.

Having denounced the attacks and the attackers, however, the MCB statement

reinstates the point that Blair did not take up - Muslims are *victims* of terrorism, and therefore not perpetrators (extract 8, lines 18-21), and so should not be further victimized.

(8) Muslim Council of Britain 13/09/01

18. Terror affects us all. Terror of this
19. enormity must not be compounded by
20. knee-jerk reactions that would make
21. victims of other innocent people. We
22. would remind the government and the
23. media that the consequences of
24. unsubstantiated speculation in the
25. past, such as the case of the
26. Oklahoma
27. bombing, produced a climate of fear
28. among Muslims that should not be
29. repeated.

Compare this to what MCB said in its first statement:

(9) Muslim Council of Britain 11/09/01

27. they too are beginning to feel a huge
28. sense of fear. Terror makes victims of
29. us all, it is beyond reason. Terror on
30. this scale must not be compounded by
31. knee-jerk reactions that would make
32. victims of other innocent peoples

Both texts position Muslims as victims of terrorism, 'along with everyone else' (extract 8, line 18 and extract 9, lines 28,29). Muslims are, however, in addition potentially victims of backlash, 'knee jerk reactions'. Psychologically in fact they are victims already - in fearing such knee jerk reactions. There is a significant difference between the two MCB press releases, understandable in the network sequence. The second statement does not just warn of a backlash but also provides an instance (i.e. what happened in the aftermath of the Oklahoma bombing.) Providing the instance amplifies the previously ignored point. The fear and warning implicit in Blair's comments is made explicit and documented.

There is also an indication that the representatives of Muslims are less

sanguine than Blair about the effectiveness of dissociating the Islam from the attacks as a means of safeguarding their community.

(10) Muslim Council of Britain 13/09/01

29. There exists a heightened sense of
30. insecurity amongst Muslims in Britain
31. though we warmly welcome our
32. Prime Minister's comments yesterday
33. when he emphasised that Muslims in
34. this country clearly condemn this
35. atrocity. The Prime Minister warned
36. against speculation that can endanger
37. the lives of the entire community.
38. Our thoughts and heartfelt concerns
39. are with all those affected at this
40. mournful moment.

The defence of British Muslims against the backlash is thus managed jointly by Blair and the Muslim representatives interactively in the dialogical network. Let us summarise this network so far. Two interactions were *distributed* in the press conferences and press releases. One can be glossed as follows: Blair and the MCB are taking religion in general and Islam in particular out of the 9/11 attacks: Blair asserted that Muslims condemn the attacks and the MCB did so; he then publicly welcomed the condemnation and used it in subsequent argument. The second interaction involved the MCB warning against knee-jerk reactions which would make Muslims double victims in the 'war on terror'. Blair here responded only weakly and in part and MCB reiterated the point in its second statement. This is not a theoretical piece, but let us draw out a point implicit in this analysis. The sequence of activities that *supervenes* on face-to-face interactions is readily understandable in terms of the same pragmatic categories that we find in face to face conversations – one does not have to formulate abstract, previously unnoticed social structures. We have shown elsewhere that dialogical networks are partly understandable in terms of standard adjacency pairs and three-part sequences (Leudar and Nekvapil, 2004). The turn-allocation mechanism (cf. Sacks, Schegloff

and Jefferson, 1974), however, does not seem to operate in dialogical networks.

The next crucial happening in the dialogical framework was Blair's statement to the House of Commons and the ensuing debate. Our analysis of the statement's dialogical connections and textual affinities with speeches of G.W. Bush and Osama bin Laden is available in Leudar, Marsland, Nekvapil (2004). What concerns us here is how Blair managed the religious aspects of the events, and how the representatives of British Muslims responded. The responses we shall analyse are (1) those by two MPs with Muslim connections (Khalid Mahmood and Mohammad Sarwar), (2) a further press release by the MCB and finally (3) an article in Muslim News.

(11) Hansard, 14/9/2001: Column 604

82. The Prime Minister: We do not yet
83. know the exact origin of this evil.
84. But if, as appears likely, it is so
85. called Islamic fundamentalists, we
86. know that they do not speak or act
87. for the vast majority of decent law-
88. abiding Muslims throughout the
89. world. I say to our Arab and
90. Muslim friends: "Neither you nor
91. Islam is responsible for this; on the
92. contrary, we know you share our
93. shock at this terrorism, and we ask
94. you as friends to make common
95. cause with us in defeating this
96. barbarism that is totally foreign to
97. the true spirit and teachings of
98. Islam."

Hitherto, Blair systematically denied that the motivation for the attacks was in Islam and that the perpetrators were Muslims – they were 'terrorists' and defined in terms of consequences of their deeds on 9/11. At the press conference on 12/09 Blair avoided denoting the attackers as 'Islamic fundamentalists'; here, however, they become 'so called Islamic fundamentalists' indicating that that may be a view at large. Blair used the expression with reluctance and in somebody else's voice; even so he introduced the possibility that the attacks were religiously motivated.

(12) Hansard, 14/9/2001: Column 604

((x lines omitted))

1. The Prime Minister: There will, of
2. course, be different shades of opinion
3. heard today. That again is as it should
4. be, but let us unite in agreeing this:
5. what happened in the United States on
6. Tuesday was an act of wickedness for
7. which there can be no justification.
8. Whatever the cause, whatever the
9. perversion of religious feeling,
10. whatever the political belief, to inflict
11. such terror on the world; to take the
12. lives of so many innocent and
13. defenceless men, women, and
14. children, can never ever be justified.

Hitherto the attackers were not simply Muslims, now Blair dissociates the terrorism from Islam by dividing Islam properly understood from the false Islam of the 'so called Islamic fundamentalists.' In fact, Blair presents the attacks as being caused by 'perversion of religious feeling' (line 9). Blair's formulation of the attacks and the enemy then still draws away from religion but less resolutely – a Muslim can be a friend or a foe and the attackers could have been religiously motivated. It is now the status of the religious motivation that is downgraded – it is a wrong understanding, a perversion. In this formulation, the West and the Muslim world are not divided by the attacks, but the Muslim world is fragmented.

Who, though, is Blair's argument for? - there is no single audience. He speaks to those present in the House, but the argument is also publicly available - in full to anybody with access to Hansard and Cable TV, and abridged in media reports. (We have already considered one Guardian report, extract 6.) Blair statement assumes that his arguments will be reported widely - he directs some of his comments to his 'Arab and Muslim friends throughout the world'. This expression sets up a category with an open and partly self-selecting incumbency (cf. Kühn 1995). What concerns us now is how Blair's arguments were taken up by Muslims. Khalid

Mahmood represents a constituency with a large Muslim population in Birmingham and responded to Blair in the House of Commons.

(13) Hansard, 14/9/2001: Column 604

364. Mr. Khalid Mahmood (Birmingham, Perry
 365. Barr): Will the Prime Minister accept my
 366. unreserved condemnation of the
 367. atrocities carried out in the United
 368. States? Will he also accept that that
 369. terrible act of terrorism claimed the lives
 370. of many people of many faiths, including
 371. Muslims? In addition, will he assure the
 372. House that it would be quite wrong for
 373. British Muslims to be tarred with the
 374. same brush following that dreadful act of
 375. terrorism?
- ((the statement in full))

Mahmood's contribution to the parliamentary debate is designed for an audience prepared to believe the worst about Muslims - are they complicit in the attacks? This is not surprising, since at the time the national press drew controversial statements out of some Islamic militants in the UK, and reactions in Palestine and Iran celebrating the attacks were publicised in the British national press. The sequential character of Mahmood's parliamentary question is contingent - he starts by managing his participant position in the conflict. He condemns the attacks on the United States, with his formulation of the events echoing Blair's (line 365-367). He is a Muslim, represents Muslims and is condemning the attacks. This condemnation needs to be understood not in isolation but in the dialogical network. Mahmood fulfils Blair's point that the attacks did not result from Islam – but he is not the first Muslim to do so, the MCB did so previously. Having managed his participant position, Mahmood uses it to characterize Muslims as victims (this point has also been made by the MCB, see excerpts 2, 8, 9), and asks for a reassurance from the Prime Minister that he does not hold Muslims *in general* to be responsible for the attacks. Note that he does this as an ally. His description of the attacks

resonates that of Blair, and the possibility that the attackers were Muslim is left open. In other words, Mahmood does not argue that the attacks were nothing whatsoever to do with Islam. His concern is local, and his strategy is to dissociate 'British Muslims' from the attacks - they should not be 'tarred with the same brush' (line 373). Blair implies that the attackers' motivation was a perversion of Islam and Mahmood does not reject the implication that the motivation came from Islam. In his reply in the House of Commons, Blair takes up and develops Mahmood's representation of British Muslims.

(14) Hansard, 14/9/2001: Column 604

375. The Prime Minister:

376. I thank my hon. Friend for his words. He
377. speaks on behalf of many Muslims in
378. this country when he says that they
379. share the shock and horror at this
380. outrage. The fact that the Muslim
381. Council of Britain issued a statement of
382. such strength and so quickly indicates
383. what we know to be true: that those who
384. truly follow the religion of Islam are
385. decent, peaceful and law-abiding people.
386. Like us, they have often been victims
387. of terrorism and, like us, they want it
388. stamped out.

He recognizes Mahmood's position in the House - 'he speaks on behalf of many Muslims *in this country*'. He thus accepts the understanding of the events Mahmood voices not as his own only but also as that of others of his faith. Blair in effect uses Mahmood's intervention together with the statement of the Muslim Council of Britain as evidence for his claim that those who *truly* follow the faith of Islam could not have carried out the attacks. Blair and Mahmood then both acknowledge that the attackers may have been religiously motivated, but their 'Islam' is a perversion, and they both explicitly distance the majority of Muslims from them. So as we argued elsewhere, the category 'Muslims' becomes a heterogeneous collection.

This three-part exchange between Blair and Mahmood is not a private matter – it is

in the public domain. In public view, Mahmood aligns British Muslims with Blair and in doing so provides the evidence for Blair's argument that Islam is not intrinsically related to the attacks. Blair groups together the reactions of different Muslim representatives distributed in time and space and uses them jointly to document Muslim reaction to the events. What Blair and Mahmood say has to be understood not simply as an encapsulated face to face interaction in the House but as a part of a dialogical network. Talk issued in different places is collated and broadcast to multiple audiences at the same time, and one designs contributions in alignment with other contributions in the network. Note also that even though Blair refers to 'a statement' of the MCB he does not specify which one; this is not important, and in fact Blair could have been responding to either statement by the Muslim Council of Britain on 11th or 13th of September. Both take up Blair's invitation to join his position in the conflict.

We have noted that when the MCB presented Muslims as victims of terrorism and possibly of a backlash, they did not get a clear response from Blair. Mahmood reiterates both points and now Blair accepts that Muslims (or at least some of them) have also been victims of terrorism, characterizing them as 'decent, peaceful and law abiding people' (extract 14, lines 383-385). The question then is, why does Blair answer now, but ignored the point when it was put to him by MCB? There are several possibilities, which are not mutually exclusive. One is that when the question is put to him in a face to face situation, he is obliged to respond. The obligation is produced by the turn allocation system, which operates in face to face conversations but not in dialogical networks. (These are distributed and *not* constrained by 'one person speaks at a time' and 'next turn allocation' rules – see Leudar and Nekvapil, 2004; cf. Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974.) Not responding to the question as put by

Mahmood would be hearable in Parliament as not agreeing that Muslims can be victims of terrorism and backlash.

Blair could also be taking up the point now for an additional reason— we observed that in dialogical networks politicians do not respond to single questions but only when these have been duplicated several times (see Nekvapil and Leudar, 2002b).

Mohammad Sarwar is another member of the House of Commons with Muslim links.

(15) Hansard, 14/9/2001: Column 634

1. Mr. Mohammad Sarwar (Glasgow, Govan):
2. It is hard to comprehend or to come to
3. terms with the tragic and staggering death
4. toll that has been inflicted upon the
5. American people and those of other
6. nations. Our hearts and our thoughts are
7. with all those who have lost friends and
8. family. People of all nationalities and
9. faiths have perished in this meaningless
10. atrocity. I speak on behalf of my
11. constituents, and undoubtedly on behalf of
12. the Muslim community in this country and
13. beyond, when I say that this barbaric and
14. inhumane terrorist atrocity must be
15. condemned unreservedly.

Like Blair, the MCB and Mahmood, Sarwar endeavours to forestall the victimisation of the Muslim community in the UK. He begins his statement by establishing his participant position in the conflict by denouncing the attacks (lines 2-8), speaking for his constituents and the Muslims in the U.K. and beyond (lines 10-13) - Khalid Mahmood spoke just for the British Muslims. The denouncement sets these Muslims apart from Osama bin Laden, whose group is suspected to have carried out the attacks (extract 4) and who three weeks later declared that God was the agent or principal of the attacks (Leudar, Marsland and Nekvapil 2004). Sarwar includes Muslims amongst the victims of the attacks, as the MCB did (lines 8-9), and, in addition, he is cautious about joining the 'war on terror'.

(16) Hansard, 14/9/2001: Column 634

16. Mr. Mohammad Sarwar:
17. We would solidly support all legitimate
18. efforts to bring the perpetrators to justice.
19. Whoever the culprits turn out to be, it is
20. critical that we send a clear message that
21. they cannot possibly claim to represent
22. the true interests of any religious or
23. ethnic group. In the recent past we have
24. seen how hysteria can be whipped up at
25. times of tragedy and the corrosive effect
26. that that has on society. It is for that
27. reason that I support the Prime Minister
28. in his clear message about the danger of
29. stereotyping communities, particularly
30. the Muslim community. With those
31. words, my right hon. Friend has given
32. comfort to people in this country and
33. across the world. It is critical that, in
34. giving support to any action, we do so
35. observing the principles of justice and
36. within the framework of international
37. law. We must naturally give our support
38. to our American allies, but we must
39. counsel against unilateral action. We
40. must avoid action that could result in the
41. deaths of thousands of other innocent
42. civilians, thus perpetuating the cycle of
43. violence. We cannot afford to isolate an
44. of our allies in finding solutions, and in
45. particular, if there is evidence that
46. Osama bin Laden is responsible, our
47. allies who recognize the Taliban
48. Government—namely, Saudi Arabia,
49. Pakistan and the United Arab
50. Emirates—will be crucial to influencing
51. the situation.

He conditionally supports 'legitimate efforts' to bring the perpetrators to justice. Such efforts are those based on principles of justice and in accord with international laws (lines 32-36). This is what 'unilateral action' (i.e. the war against terrorism) would side step. The position of the Muslim community in Britain as represented by Sarwar is thus potentially complex. They denounce the attacks and the attackers alongside with Blair and Bush. They however expect and are opposed to inappropriate responses to those acts in the future which would victimize the innocent and alienate potential allies.

We have already noted that Blair was unwilling to analyse the broader causes of the attacks. Sarwar does exactly this. His representation of the intentionality of the attacks is worthy of note.

(17) Hansard, 14/9/2001: Column 634

51. Mr. Mohammad Sarwar: It is a difficult
52. time, but I believe that it is the right
53. time to examine more deeply our role
54. and responsibilities in the world.
55. We must attempt to understand why
56. some extremists feel driven to the
57. abhorrent madness that we have
58. witnessed in New York and
59. Washington. There can be no
60. justification for this vulgar terrorist
61. atrocity, but we cannot be blind to the
62. plight of oppressed people who look to
63. Europe and the USA for support. As a
64. former colonial power we have a
65. special responsibility. We should use
66. our influence with the Americans and
67. other allies to redouble our efforts in
68. search of a just solution to the
69. outstanding issues in the middle east
70. and other parts of the world. This brutal
71. terrorist attack is profoundly contrary
72. to the doctrine of Islam and has been
73. strongly condemned by Muslim states,
74. Muslim clerics and individual Muslims
75. throughout the world. I can only
76. reiterate that condemnation and, on
77. behalf of all my constituents, express
78. my hope that the international
79. community can achieve justice for the
80. innocent victims and their grieving
81. families.

Up to this point in the network the attacks were presented as caused by absent moral 'qualities' of the perpetrators, and their religious perversions. In Sarwar's account individual features are still present, but they result from something else – the 'terrorists' felt 'driven to the abhorrent madness'. There is both a delicacy and ambiguity to this statement – he does not say they *were* driven (which would in effect excuse them) but they '*felt* they were driven' (but was this feeling just a part of madness and completely unjustified?). So, without excusing the attacks and shifting the blame, he distributes the blame, presenting the attacks as carried out in

abhorrent madness caused by oppression (lines 55-62).⁷² Note further that UK and USA are not presented as the agents of the oppression but as potential agents of remedy (lines 62-70). The reaction to the attacks should be not just retribution but also attending to the deeper causes.

Notice the sequencing of Sarwar's contribution: he (1) establishes his participant position and only then (2) he objects to reprisals that would victimize the innocents and topicalizes the problem of the broader causes of the attacks; then (3) he re-establishes his participant position (as one of 'us' – lines 70-76). The disagreement with Blair and Bush is done from within the membership category, it is a matter of internal variation to be accommodated without affecting Sarwar's incumbency. Clearly, in dialogical networks, the analysis of the membership category work and the analysis of sequencing cannot be divorced from each other. As in face-to-face conversations, establishing a participant position is a precondition for doing things but it is also produced by doing things (see Watson, 1976; 1997).

Khalid Mahmood contributed once more to the debate, later on the same day. He already spoke once to dissociate British Muslims from the attacks in his previous contribution to the parliamentary debate (excerpt 13). Now he provides an extended biographic narrative sharing his experience of the 9/11 attacks as they happened.

(18) Hansard, 14/9/2001: Column 649

1. Mr. Khalid Mahmood (Birmingham, Perry
2. Barr): On Tuesday evening, I sat with my
3. family in my home in Birmingham,
4. watching television with increasing horror
5. and revulsion as the pictures from New
6. York and Washington were repeatedly
7. shown. We watched the images of an

⁷² Blair did not respond to Sarwar's contribution - only the British secretary of defence J. Hoon did. He just acknowledged the need to maintain allies in the Muslim world and his speech thus need not be subjected to a detailed analysis here.

8. airliner filled with passengers smashing
 9. into the World Trade Centre; we watched
 10. the buildings explode and collapse. We
 11. watched terrified New Yorkers staring at
 12. the sky with horror and disbelief, matched
 13. only by their sense of helplessness. We sat
 14. there, as a family, sharing the grief that
 15. most people in the United States and most
 16. people in Britain were feeling. Like many
 17. members of our extended family and
 18. members of our community who were
 19. watching television that evening, we were
 20. all saddened and grief-stricken by what
 21. had taken place. We were no different
 22. from any other family in Britain: we were
 23. all the same, grieving over a great loss of
 24. life

Here Mahmood does not simply denounce the attacks and the attackers. He describes vividly his experience - including 'the horror and revulsion' - of the events as they unfold. The experience is, however, not just his – it is a collective one, that of his family and his community's. Moreover, that community is united in that experience with 'most people' in Britain and the USA. Mahmood in effect sets up a collection, glossable perhaps as 'ordinary people', defined in terms of shared experience of the events, subsuming the British Muslim community in it. The community is united in grief. Mahmood, however, does not establish the communality just with respect to the experience of the 9/11 attacks. He also stresses his own roots in the community – and ties it to a broader integration in the UK of diverse groups.

(19) Hansard, 14/9/2001: Column 649

25. I grew up, went to school
 26. and did my engineering in Birmingham.
 27. It is also where I joined the Labour party.
 28. I could go to school and to my place of
 29. worship without feeling different from
 30. the rest of the community. I believed that
 31. our nation's integration and cultural
 32. diversity was what we wanted. It is what
 33. this country is. Those are our strengths
 34. and I do not want to see them broken
 35. down by those who purport to be
 36. Muslims.

Having established the place of the Muslim community in UK society, Mahmood turns to the religious uniqueness of that community. It sets them apart, but the difference is immaterial with respect to 9/11 attacks.

(20) Hansard, 14/9/2001: Column 649

50. People look at me and ask what my
 51. religion is. It is not the religion of the
 52. people who carried out that act. My
 53. religion is the religion that believes in
 54. peace and harmony. Above all, I am
 55. British—and, in fact, a Brummie,
 56. having been brought up in
 57. Birmingham and having lived there.

The danger for the British Muslim community is that they will be put together with the attackers on the basis of the common religion, especially if that religion is understood as motivating the attacks. Mahmood therefore (1) differentiates his from the attackers' religion, and dissociates his religion from the attacks. His Islam is a peace loving religion (extract 20, lines 54). In fact, he specifically brings the Muslim identity of the attackers into doubt – 'they purport to be Muslims' (extract 19, line 34-6).

Mahmood works explicitly to prevent a backlash against British Muslims. The second MCB statement reminded us of the backlash following the Oklahoma bombing. Mahmood recounts a terrorist attack in Birmingham and the subsequent backlash against the Irish Catholic community and their representatives.

(21) Hansard, 14/9/2001: Column 649

58. Birmingham faced similar problems in
 59. 1974, when a building there was bombed
 60. by the IRA. Councillor John O'Keefe, a
 61. prominent member of the Sparkbrook
 62. community, was focused on by the rest
 63. of the community because he was Irish.
 64. It was not because he had any links with
 65. the IRA or anybody else. He had settled
 66. in Birmingham and wanted to play a part
 67. in society there, but he was picked on
 68. because of his Irish heritage.

Blair's, Mahmood's and Sarwar's arguments did not remain without impact elsewhere. They were reported, evaluated and used. On the 18th of September, the MCB issued its third statement, assessing the strategy to forestall the backlash by taking religion out of the conflict. This statement acknowledges and appreciates Blair's attempts, but they are obviously not enough.

(22) Muslim Council of Britain 18/09/01

1. Statement by the Muslim Council of
 2. Britain on the occasion of the special
 3. House of Commons Debate
 4. ((7 lines omitted))
 5. Muslims in Britain and around the
 6. world feel a huge sense of fear,
 7. vulnerability and insecurity in the wake
 8. of Tuesday's awful events.
 9. Commendably the Prime Minister said
 10. "...this is not a situation in which we
 11. should see this as a cause between the
 12. Muslim faith and the world, but
 13. between terrorism and the rest of the
 14. world, including the Muslim faith."
 15. However, anti-Muslim sentiments are
 16. manifesting themselves in both calls for
 17. retribution against Muslim states and
 18. by anti-Muslim attacks here in Britain.
- ((17 lines omitted))

This statement is explicitly indexed to more than one event in the network. It is issued specifically for the occasion of the debate, to accompany it, but it reacts to what Blair said at the press conference. The quote is from what Blair said at the press conference on 12th and what was also reported in the Guardian (see above).

Another relevant newspaper article was published in *The Muslim News* on 28/9/2001. It summarizes in detail the strategy of Blair and Muslim representatives to forestall the backlash, explicitly presenting the condemnations of the attacks as attempts to safeguard the Muslim community (note the text in lines 30-33).⁷³

**(23) The Muslim News, Issue 149,
Friday 28 September 2001
Outpouring of Muslim grief by Hamed
Chapman**

((18 lines omitted))

1. The speed of condemnations and
2. expression of condolences from numerous
3. Muslim organisations was welcomed by
4. Prime Minister Tony Blair. "The vast
5. majority of Muslims are decent, upright
6. people who share our horror at what has
7. happened," he told a news conference
8. on September 12. Both Muslim MPs also
9. made their voices heard during the
10. emergency debate when Parliament was
11. recalled on September 15. "I sat with my
12. family in my home in Birmingham,
13. watching with increasing horror and
14. revulsion as the pictures from New
15. York and Washington were repeatedly
16. shown," Khalid Mahmood said.
17. Mohammad Sarwar said it was "hard to
18. comprehend or come to terms with the
19. tragic and staggering death toll inflicted
20. upon the American people and those of
21. other nations." Messages of disbelief and
22. sympathies were also widely expressed by
23. all Islamic countries and even outlawed
24. groups. Among them, chairman of the
25. Nahda Party of Tunisia said "any Muslim,
26. however much he may disagree with
27. American foreign policy, particularly its
28. clear favouritism to the Israeli occupation
29. forces in Palestine, cannot but express his
30. condemnation of these terrible acts." But
31. despite the number of statements, the
32. backlash against the Muslim community
33. came with vengeance largely due to the
34. irresponsibility of the mainstream media
35. and comments by certain 'experts' and
36. officials. Warnings about the likely
37. repercussions were made in virtually every
38. statement issued by Muslim groups. Both
39. the Muslim Welfare House and Council of
40. Mosques in Tower Hamlets referred to the
41. 1995 Oklahoma bombing and called on the
42. need to resist the temptation to scapegoat
43. the Muslim community. The MCB warned
44. against compounding the scale of the terror
45. by "knee-jerk reactions that would make
46. victims of other innocent peoples of the
47. world." During the Parliamentary debate,
48. Mahmood warned MPs to be aware of the
49. media's role in igniting further tensions.
50. Sarwar also spoke of the dangers of
51. stereotyping communities, particularly

⁷³ The Muslim News is a monthly and the issue of 28/9/2001 we use here was the first issue after 9-11.

52. Muslims. Some MPs in constituencies with
 53. sizeable Muslim populations, like former
 54. Foreign Office Minister John Battle from
 55. Leeds voiced concern against the blame
 56. being put on Islam and called for a
 57. deepening of the traditions and religions in
 58. Britain and internationally.
 ((35 lines follow))

The article collects statements which were voiced on different occasions: in Parliament (Mahmood, Sarwar), at the Downing Street press conference (Blair) and at the press conference by Muslim Council of Britain on the 11th September. The author not only quotes from Mahmood's and Sarwar's speeches, but he also interprets fragments of them as 'warnings', in particular with regard to the important role of the media in the impending conflict. Importantly, he mentions those actors and settings which we as analysts included in our analysis presented above. This indicates that our analysis of the dialogical network is not arbitrary but something participants themselves oriented to (in detail, see Nekvapil and Leudar 2002b). As is obvious from the article, our analysis however dealt only with a fragment of the dialogical network. We didn't pay any attention, for instance, to 'chairman of the Nahda Party of Tunisia', 'Muslim Welfare House', 'Council of Mosques in Tower Hamlets', 'former Foreign Office Minister John Battle from Leeds' and other actors mentioned in the rest of Chapman's article (not cited above). This is not surprising as we dealt with verbal reactions related to an event which has become a part of world history – no paper can cover all contributions to such a dialogical network.

Concluding remarks

1. Following the 9/11 attacks there was an immediate and concerted effort to forestall a backlash against the Muslim community in the U.K. Prime Minister Blair's strategy was to set apart religion and terrorism, denying that the attacks were religiously motivated, thus securing allies for the 'war on terror' to

come, and removing support from the culprits. The central role of the representatives of British Muslims was to fulfill the points Blair made by publicly denouncing the attacks and demonstrating their contrariness to the teachings of Islam. The second line of interaction consisted in Muslim representatives trying to limit the reprisals for the attacks and to ensure that the innocent would not suffer; all this with cooperation from Blair.

2. These interactions supervened on a set of face-to-face interactions – press conferences, press releases and debates in the House of Commons. The role of the media in general was to make each face-to-face interaction public. The role of newspapers was specifically to summarize the network interactions for the public, and to assess their effectiveness.
3. Our analysis indicates that in political discourse that is contingent on violent conflict, it is always necessary to pay attention concurrently to both pragmatic and membership categorization aspects of interactions. Muslim representatives were obliged scrupulously to establish and maintain their participant identities as quintessentially British, opponents of terrorism and allies of Blair/Bush, and to make any potentially controversial points from within that membership category. This subsequently reproduced their membership..
4. This indicates that social identity needs to be conceived in a situated manner, paying attention to how it is managed in situ rather than to how such categories are psychologically represented and the function they may have in reducing 'information overload' (cf. e.g. Antaki and Widdicombe, 1998).
5. We observed that dialogical networks are (partly) organized in the same structures as face-to-face conversations, i.e. adjacency pairs and three part sequences. These structures are, however, not quite adjacent or

‘local’ – the first part need not be followed by the second part in the here-and-now, but in a different place and after a day or more. The fact that network interactions are distributed in time and space means that the turn-taking mechanism cannot operate and the relevance of participants’ activities is accomplished through addressivity markers. This allows parts of conversational structures to be duplicated, meaning that, for instance, a single question can receive a multiple answer, and an answer can be not to a single question but to several questions collated. As a result, the obligation to perform second parts of adjacency pairs is attenuated.

6. There are methodological advantages in using the concept of a network. It is required to understand the behaviour of participants in face-to-face interactions in public. It enabled us to analyze in a joined way very different formats of discourse. We attempted to collect a relatively complete corpus so that it would reflect orientations of the participants to each other. For this reason we restricted ourselves to the public domain without interrogating the participants about interactions hidden from the media and the public. Even so, we did miss some local events, which would have completed the record of the network.

References

- Anscombe, G.E.M. (1959) *Intention*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Antaki, C. and Widdicombe, S. (eds.) (1998) *Identities in Talk*. London: Sage.
- Austin, J.L. (1970) *Philosophical Papers*. J.O. Urmson and G.J. Warnock (eds.) Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Chilton, P. (2004) *Analysing Political Discourse. Theory and Practice*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Chomsky, N. (2001) 9-11. New York: Seven Stories Press.
- Edwards, D. (1997) *Discourse and Cognition*. London: Sage.
- Edwards, J. (2004) After the fall. *Discourse and Society* 15, 155-184.
- Greatbatch, D. (1992) On management of disagreement between news interviewees. In Drew, P. and Heritage, J. (eds.) *Talk at Work*. Cambridge: C.U.P.
- Hodges, A. and Niple, CH. (eds.) (2007) *Discourse, War and Terrorism*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Kühn, Peter (1995) *Mehrfachadressierung. Untersuchungen zur adressatenspezifischen Polyvalenz sprachlichen Handelns*. Tübingen: Niemeyer.
- Leudar, I. (1995) Reporting political arguments. In van Eemeren et al (eds.) *Reconstruction and Application. Proceedings of the Third Conference on Argumentation*. Vol. III. Amsterdam: Sic Sat. Pp. 42-59.
- Leudar, I. and Antaki, C. (1996) Discourse participation, reported speech and research practices in social psychology. *Theory and Psychology* 6, 5-29.
- Leudar, I. and Nekvapil, J. (1998) On the emergence of political identity in Czech mass media: The case of the Democratic Party of Sudetenland. *Czech Sociological Review* 6, 43-58.
- Leudar, I. and Nekvapil, J. (2000) Presentations of Romanies in the Czech media: On category work in television debates. *Discourse and Society* 11, 487-513.
- Leudar, I. and Nekvapil, J. (2004) Media dialogical networks and political argumentation. *Journal of Language and Politics* 3, 247-266.

- Leudar, I., Marsland, V., and Nekvapil, J. (2004) On membership categorisation: 'Us', 'them' and 'doing violence' in political discourse. *Discourse and Society* 15, 243-266.
- Levinson, S.C. (1988) Putting linguistics on a proper footing. In Drew, P. and Wootton, A. (eds.) *Goffman. Exploring the Interaction Order*. Oxford: Polity Press. Pp. 161-227.
- Lincoln, B. (2003) *Holy Terrors. Thinking about Religion after September 11*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Lynch, M. and Bogen, D. (1996) *The Spectacle of History*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Nekvapil, J. and Leudar, I. (1998) Masmediální utváření dialogických sítí a politické identity: případ Demokratické Strany Sudety [Emergence of mass media dialogical networks and political identity: The case of the Democratic Party of Sudetenland]. *Slovo a slovesnost* 59, 30-52.
- Nekvapil, J. and Leudar, I. (2002a) Sekvenční struktury v mediálních dialogických sítích [Sequential structures in media dialogical networks]. *Sociologický časopis* 38, 483-499.
- Nekvapil, J. and Leudar, I. (2002b) On dialogical networks: Arguments about the migration law in Czech mass media in 1993. In Hester, S. and Housley, W. (eds.) *Language, Interaction and National Identity*. Aldershot: Ashgate. Pp. 68-113.
- Nekvapil, J. and Leudar, I. (2003) O českých masmédiích z etnometodologické perspektivy: romská identita v dialogických sítích [Czech media from ethnomethodological perspective: On Roma identity in dialogical networks]. *Slovo a slovesnost* 64, 161-192.
- Richardson, J.E. (2004) *(Mis)Representing Islam. The Racism and Rhetoric of British Broadsheet Newspapers*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Sacks, H., Schegloff, E. and Jefferson, G. (1974) A simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking in conversation. *Language* 50, 696-735.
- Sharrock, W. and Leudar, I. (2003) Action, description, redescription and concept change: a reply to Fuller and Roth. *History of the Human Sciences* 16, 101-115.
- Watson, D.R. (1976) Some conceptual issues in the social identification of victims and offenders. In E.C. Viano (ed.) *Victims and Society*. Washington D.C., Visage Press. Pp. 60-71.
- Watson, D.R. (1997) The presentation of victim and motive in discourse: the case of police interrogations and interviews. In M. Travers and J.F. Manzo (ed.) *Law in Action*. Aldershot: Ashgate. Pp. 77-71.

The Audience They Assign Themselves: Three Arab Channels and Their “Self-Presentation” (al-Jazeera, al-Manar, al-Hurra)

Baudouin Dupret

CNRS, ISP, Cachan, Paris, France
(dupret@link.net)

Jean-Noël Ferrié

CNRS, PACTE, Grenoble, France
(ferrie@link.net)

The landscape of Arab media was dominated for a long time by the monopoly of the national television channels. It is not our task here to reconstruct its history, and it will suffice simply to underscore that this era has passed. The national borders have been erased, first to the profit of satellite channels broadcasting in English and in French and, later, to those modeled after al-Jazeera--a television channel based in Qatar--which have begun broadcasting in Arabic. Thus, members of the Arabic-speaking public who have a satellite connection at their disposal have begun to gain access to a pluralistic and transnational media world.

The extreme reticence of the satellite television channels broadcasting in Arabic concerning the identity of their silent partners, their moneylenders, and their financial backers is equaled only by their verbosity concerning the profile they aim to give themselves and, therefore, the type of audience that they aim to attract by very reason of this profile. In this article, we describe the practical deployment of this self-production and the production of the virtual audience to which these three channels picked up by the satellite “Arabsat” are delivered. This production operates mainly through membership categorization of the audience these channels aim to reach, but also through the affiliations that supposedly characterize them. In other words, the spots in which these different channels present themselves participate in the production of an ongoing typology of their own identity and the identity of their supposed viewers.

This article analyzes in detail three advertising spots, each transmitted during the

month of April, 2004, by one of the satellite channels broadcasting in Arabic: al-Jazeera, al-Manar, and al-Hurra. Our purpose here is not to explain or interpret what these channels do, but rather to adopt, insofar as we are able, the position of ordinary television viewers “channel-surfing” in search of programs and coming upon the spots in question during their search. Obviously, our approach will be more analytical than would be natural to these viewers, but at least it has the merit of not being so much a demonstration of a pre-established theory as the uncovering of the inductive work carried out by these channels.

In examining carefully the constitutive elements of the spots broadcasted by al-Jazeera, al-Manar and al-Hurra, we will show how a televised image is the vehicle of a limited number of logical options. Having at our disposal only these spots, we will try to make explicit the possibilities for reading them which are open to their potential viewers. The analysis of their structural organization will permit a grasp of the range of possibilities resulting from the interaction of the spot, the background affiliations of its producers and intended viewers and the attitudes which result from them. The goal, then, is to draw an accurate picture of the structures and systems of intelligibility associated with these spots as well as the background affiliations which interact with these structures and systems in a way that generates a certain comprehension and appreciation of them.

Al-Jazeera: testimonial voices

The al-Jazeera spot consists of a series of images and of voices, seeming to be

testimonies and personal reflections and converging towards the logo of the channel and its tagline: “one opinion and the other opinion.” Here is a transcription of the words of the various speakers.

- 1- anâ 'admâ dâ'at biyya 'd-dinyâ anâ lessa mihâgiran min al-'Irâq (life really has never given me anything for free I have just emigrated from Iraq)
- 2- lâ yûjad hunâlik ay ard mumkin an asta'id 'an baladî wa 'an ardî (there is no land whatsoever out there that I could substitute for my country and my land)
- 3- anâ yawmiyyan as'al nafsî hâdhâ al-su'âl lêsh 'arabî (me every day I ask myself this question why Arab)
- 4- walâkin lâ tafsîr li-hâdhâ al-jawâb (but there is no explanation in answer)
- 5- lâ raqâba 'alâ harakât jasadî lâ raqâba 'alâ harakât kitâbî lâ raqâba 'alâ khiyâlî (no control over the actions of my body no control over the actions of my writing no control over my imagination)
- 6- zikriyâtî bi-l-fatra dî alîma bes li-ennî anâ ma-'amaltesh ellî kunt 'â'iz a'malu bi-masr (my memories of this period are painful only because me I did not do what I wanted to do in Egypt)
- 7- watanî al-haqîqî hiya lughatî ma ba'â a'dar ashûf hudûd aktar min-hâ (my true native land is my language and I cannot see any other borders but that)
- 8- *al-jazîra* al-ra'y wa'l-ra'y al-âkhar (x2) (*al-jazeera* the opinion and the other opinion)

The sequence of this spot breaks down into eight segments whose content we analyze as follows:

1)



anâ 'admâ dâ'at biyya
'd-dinyâ anâ lessa
mihâgiran min al-'Irâq
[male voice]

Moon, boat, birds in
flight
Image of a man
expressing his
suffering

life really has never
given me any gifts I
have just emigrated from
Iraq

The first segment shows the rising moon on a background of pastel-hued water crossed by birds in flight, upon which is superimposed the image of a man who is clearly suffering. Right away one picks up the contrast between the “postcard” effect of the first images and that of the suffering individual. The voice is that of a man telling a personal story, and he speaks in an Egyptian dialect, noticeable in

the pronunciation and the use of certain expressions. The narration refers specifically to emigration to the oil-producing countries and to the recent events which have forced this man to leave Iraq. This testimony deploys various membership categories: Egypt--evoked through the dialect--alludes to the poverty of this country, the most populous of the Arab world; the emigration of numerous Egyptians to the oil-producing countries (thus the richest in the Gulf); the precariousness of this experience; and the vicissitudes of the politics and regional conflicts which transform individuals into the playthings of events. If the first images serve as an aesthetic introduction to the spot, the image of the person relates directly to the verbal testimony and serves as a direct entry to its drama.

2)



Jerusalem
Pleasure port
Pharaonic Egypt

lâ yûjad hunâlik ay ard	there is no land
mumkin an asta'id 'an	whatsoever out there that
baladî wa 'an ardî	I could substitute for my
[male voice]	country and my land

The second segment opens with a view of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, on which images are superimposed--first of a pleasure port, then of Pharaonic ruins. A man's voice comes in, speaking in the manner of an existential witness.

The words are pronounced in standard Arabic and refer explicitly to the theme of land and country. The membership categorizations are many: the Dome of the Rock alludes to Palestine; Pharaonic Egypt, to the illustrious ancient history of the Egyptian nation; the vocabulary referring to land and country, to the unshakeable anchoring of identity in the land. With the exception of the pleasure port, images and words converge appropriately in the idea of symbols of territorial identity. On the whole, this segment continues the theme of the first “strophe”, that of the place of

identity (here, the land). On the other hand, in spite of the linking of images, there is no dialogic relation between the first two strophes.

3)



Pharaonic Egypt
A building of modern
architecture
(Emirates)
Writing in Arabic

anâ yawmiyyan as'al nafsi
hâdhâ al-su'âl lêsh 'arabî
[female voice]

me every day I ask
myself the question
why Arab

The strophe opens with the same Pharaonic image which ends the preceding one, thus providing visual continuity in the sequence. Then comes the image of a building which, with its avant-garde architecture, symbolizes the modernity of Dubai, in the Gulf; this is overlaid with a page of Arabic calligraphy. The strophe is narrated by the only female voice of the sequence; it is the voice of an older woman suffused with a tone of existential questioning. The woman speaks in standard Arabic which does not exclude occasional recourse to a dialectal word (*lêsh*). She explicitly introduces the theme of "Arab," without making clear whether it is an ethnic or linguistic reference, even though the superimposed calligraphy introduces the theme of language. In the logic of the sequence, the strophe seems to continue the preceding one, with the theme of Arab identity following that of attachment to the land. One notes also the formulation of the question, the first part of a pair directing attention to the second part--the answer.

4)



Text in Arabic
A building of modern
architecture (Emirates)
Panoramic view of a
modern city (New
York?)

walâkin lâ tafsîr li-hâdhâ
al-jawâb
[male voice]

but there is no
explanation in answer

This return to a male voice comes in over a background of the images of the preceding strophe, to which is now added the view of New York, which connects these Arab referents to a more global one. Generally, this strophe seems to constitute a transition. Narrated in standard Arabic, the strophe is suggestive of a set of questions and answers--and of questions without answers. In this sense, it forms the second part of the pair introduced by the previous strophe. The images and the words evolve independently of each other. The text, on its part, indicates that the question, even though it finds its response (whose exact nature we do not know), remains in the nature of the ineffable and inexpressible and is felt rather than articulated.

5)



Scene of repression and
fighting
Writing of a text in
Arabic
Backlit image of a man

lâ raqâba 'alâ harakât
jasadî lâ raqâba 'alâ
harakât kitâbî lâ raqâba
'alâ khiyâlî
[male voice]

no control over the
actions of my body no
control over the actions
of my writing no control
over my imagination

This 5th strophe, narrated by a man, in standard Arabic, in a manner suggestive of a "phenomenological metaphysics," opens on a background of images mingling a repressive scene of fighting, an Arabic text appearing on the screen, and a masculine silhouette evocative of testimony under cover of anonymity as well as the daydreams of a solitary walker. This strophe activates numerous categories: liberty, control, censorship; the power of writing and of the imagination; and the pre-eminence of thought over force (which could be read as a reference to a famous quote of Ibn Khaldun). Images and words are thus in direct relation to each other. In the sequence as a whole, this strophe joins the continuation of the subject of language introduced in the third strophe. One observes a progression of the question of

identity which begins with the land, passes to language, and ends provisionally with thought. We should also note that, from the point of view of semantics, this strophe alludes as well to the repressive climate of the Arab world, which has the force of thought expressed through language as the place of identity and of resistance.

6)



Commercial port
Pharaonic Egypt
Train

zikriyâtî bi-l-fatra dî alîma
bes li-ennî anâ ma-
‘amaltesh ellî kunt ‘â’iz
a‘malu bi-masr
[male voice]

my memories of this
period are painful only
because me I did not do
what I wanted to do in
Egypt

Narrated by a man in Arabic, in an Egyptian dialect, in an autobiographical mode, the words of this strophe are spoken over a background of images of a commercial port, of Pharaonic ruins and of a train passing at great speed. Reference is made to memory and to nostalgia, to Egypt and the frustration of the wish for personal achievement. Indirectly, the theme of emigration is also suggested. It is difficult to determine the logical place of this strophe in the sequence as a whole. Clearly, further testimony (that of businessmen of the diaspora) is being articulated here, and a transition, perhaps through the image of the train, is being made with the following strophe and the conclusion of the advertising spot.

7)



Figure of a man with an
umbrella
Text in Arabic calligraphy
Flower and face

watanî al-haqîqî hiya
lughatî ma ba’â a’dar
ashûf hudûd aktar min-hâ
[male voice]

my true native land is my
language and I cannot see
any other borders but that

The voice of a man speaking a Middle-Eastern dialect, and whose tone suggests an existential commentary, comes in over an image showing the silhouette of a man carrying an umbrella and crossing the screen, on which is quickly superimposed a work of calligraphic art, then an image of flowers and a face. The words suggest the theme of identity, associating native land, language, and non-geographic borders. The speaker gives the impression of belonging to the diaspora, of formulating his commentary from outside the Arab territorial space, with the language functioning as an anchorage of identity. In the whole sequence, this strophe constitutes a return to, and the culmination of, the principal theme which has emerged as a thread throughout the various testimonies. It seems clearly to announce the approaching conclusion.

8)



Calligraphic logo of al-
Jazeera
Candle, geometric
figures
Tagline superimposed

*al-jazîra al-ra’y wa’l-ra’y
al-âkhar (x2)*

*al-jazîra the opinion
and the other opinion*

After the testimonies, the moment of synthesis and conclusion has arrived and it is composed of a combination of geometric figures, a lighted candle, the calligraphic logo of the station and its tagline, literally, “the opinion and the other opinion.” After the diversity of the various testimonies, this conclusion is apparent in all its logic: the station is promoting a pluralistic “Arabicity.”

Al-Manar: fiction and news reporting in support of a militant text

The spot from al-Manar consists, on its part, of a sort of quatrain (four-line verse) juxtaposing printed text and images and leading to an affirmation of the militant presence of a channel which is at the very heart of the important questions of the moment.

- 1- min kibd [al-Umma] (from the heart (liver, side) of [the Umma])
- 2- min nabd al-abtâl (from the pulse of heroes)
- 3- min qalb Filastîn (from the heart of Palestine)
- 4- ma'akum qanât al-Manâr (the channel al-Manâr is with you)

The sequence of this spot thus breaks down into 4 segments, the first three forming a list repetitive in morphology, vocabulary and semantics and imparting a quasi-poetic rhythm to the whole; the fourth segment brings the culmination of this crescendo and the unveiling of the enigma. Here is the analysis strophe by strophe.

1)



Text being printed on a blue background
Image of a procession bearing the portrait of Sheikh Yasin
[music « adventure »]

min kibd [al-Umma]

from the heart (liver, side) of [the Umma]

Appearing on-screen on a blue background and preceding the images, the text of the first strophe is organized around a body-related metaphor (the liver) which itself is suggestive of the centrality of life. Images follow of demonstrators brandishing the portrait of sheikh Yasin, a direct allusion to the actual event that occurred in the days following the assassination of the spiritual leader of Hamas. The text and images correspond directly, the physical body of Sheikh Yasin representing the political and religious body of the Muslim Community (the Umma) and casting Palestine as the center of these themes. The first part of a list of three starting with the preposition *min* (from) followed by a noun referring to a part of the human body (here, *kibd*, that is to say, the liver) belonging to a whole that revolves around the identity of the channel and of its listeners (the Umma), this strophe functions as an introduction to a small dramatic plot.

2)



Text being printed on a blue background
Images of youths throwing stones at soldiers
[music « adventure »]

min nabd al-abtâl

from the pulse of heroes

The second strophe begins with text appearing on a blue background and is followed by images of young men (whom one takes immediately for Palestinians) throwing stones at soldiers (whom one takes immediately for Israelis). The text and images are in clear relation to each other, the stone throwers being the heroes of a revolt which follows the rhythm of their hearts and of the blood which they shed in sacrifice, with Palestine always the backdrop. As the second element of the list, this strophe evokes the body (and the emotions linked to it) through the word *nabd* and the centrality of the Palestinian cause through the reference to heroes (*abtâl*) which is read and seen as meaning the Intifada.

3)



Text being printed on a blue background
View of al-Aqsa mosque
[music: "adventure"]

min qalb Filastîn

from the heart of Palestine

The third strophe also appears onscreen over a blue background. It continues the metaphor of the body and emotions through use of the word *qalb* (heart) and places Palestine squarely at the center of the drama. The images of al-Aqsa mosque are also explicit, this being at once the most sacred place of Palestinian Islam and the symbol of the beginning of the second Intifada. This strophe forms beside the third element of the repeated list organized around the preposition *min* (from) and a noun evoking the body and the emotions (*qalb*, heart) and the centrality of

Palestine. The metaphor of the body and emotions may be read at this moment as a sort of equation: Palestine is the cause *par excellence* of the Muslim Community.

The list is one of the most effective techniques of communication and is widely utilized (Atkinson, 1984). To quote Matoesian (2001:92), "Lists are expansive techniques for producing family resemblances, for creating a conceptual unity between otherwise diverse elements in a perceptual field, and for classifying actions through a rhythmically textured and progressively expanded litany of similar items." Lists used in this way often are composed of three items. Their effectiveness lies in their production of a sense of unity and wholeness and in the mounting power of their poetic rhythm. At the same time, they avoid the danger of wordiness and lead naturally to a conclusion which occurs as a real *denouement* of the drama built up by the morphological and semantic repetition. The list constituted by the first three strophes of the al-Manar spot leads naturally to the following conclusion:

4)



Calligraphic logo of the channel
Text superimposed
[music "adventure"]

ma'akum qanât al-Manâr

the channel al-Manar
is with you

The fourth and last strophe consists of an image of the channel's logo, to which is appended a phrase which is presented as the culmination, and the conclusion, of the preceding list. The narrative framework of the spot, then, may now be understood as the association of the Muslim Community, of Palestine, and of the TV station, in a unity at once physical and metaphorical.

Al-Hurra: the model of the advertising clip

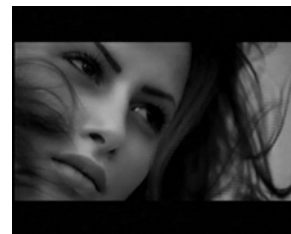
The spot from al-Hurra is presented like an advertising clip; it combines scripted images

and text directly interpellating the individuality of the viewer. Here is the complete text:

- 1- anta tufakkir (you think)
- 2- anta tatmah (you have ambitions)
- 3- anta takhtâr (you choose)
- 4- anta tu'abbir (you express)
- 5- anta hurr (you are free)
- 6- al-Hurra (al-Hurra/the Free)
- 7- kamâ anta (like you)

The sequence of this spot may be broken down into 7 segments, the first five in the form of a repeated list, the sixth and the seventh as a summarizing conclusion.

1)



jetty in the sea alternating
with a woman's
face/Text superimposed
[generic music]

anta tufakkir

you think

The first strophe begins with alternating views of the seashore (a pier at the end of which a figure stands and looks at the horizon) and the face of a woman, to which is then added a text that directly appeals to the viewer by being formulated in the second person. The text and images correspond precisely, the people adopting poses that are evidently reflective. The viewer is, for his part, immediately interpellated by the positive description of person-hood in terms of thoughtful individuality. The text can just as well be read as a conditional of the sort "if-then". It functions as an introduction to a sort of enigma built around the viewer of al-Hurra being revealed in his singularity.

2)



Skyscraper
Figure of a young man
The man directs his gaze
to the horizon
Text superimposed
[generic music]

anta tatmah

you have ambitions

The second strophe shows a skyscraper. At its foot is a young man wearing a suit, whose gaze once again is directed to the horizon. The text then follows and is superimposed, appealing to the viewer in the same way as in the first strophe. Here also text and images correspond. The modernity of the scene and the clothing clearly allude to the idea of ambition. As the second element of the list, this strophe expands upon the positive description of an individualized spectator to whom it is addressed, likewise, as an enigma of the type “if-then”.

3)



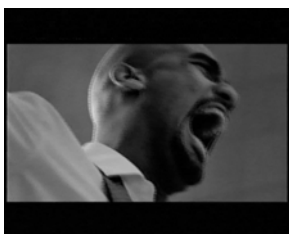
Man walking against the
flow of a crowd
Superimposed text
[generic music]

anta takhtâr

you choose

In the third strophe, one sees a man walking--first alone, then parting a dense crowd like Moses parting the waters of the Red Sea. The power of individual freedom is thus opposed to the human tide, an idea confirmed by the text that, once again directly addressing the viewer, emphasizes the free will of the individual. The image is tailored to the message of the text which it supports and illustrates. The little enigma of the type “if-then” continues, with its portrayal of the viewer as more and more set apart in an individuality that wins out over the mass.

4)



A man shouts excitedly
Superimposed text
[generic music]

anta tu‘abbir

you express

In the 4th strophe, a man, likewise young and wearing a suit, tie loose, shouts with boundless enthusiasm. Superimposed text follows which, addressing the viewer,

establishes in advance the necessary and positive nature of individual expression. The purposely scripted image and the text singling out the individual spectator continue the list begun in the first strophes and therefore, also the enigma of the conditional “if-then”. The repetition of the formula of designation and the actions linked to it produces in addition a sort of categorization leading logically to a first conclusion:

5)



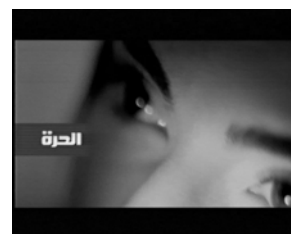
Two eyes are opening
Superimposed text
[generic music]

anta hurr

you are free

Singling out the viewer, but designating him in a predicate (“to be free”) and not through action, the 5th strophe seems to be the provisional conclusion of the list: you reflect + you have ambitions + you choose + you express = you are free. The enigma of the type “if-then” finds its resolution: “if” the viewer conforms--according to the set of directions--to this thinking, enterprising, decisive, and expressive individual, “then” he can be nothing else but free. The text appears onscreen and is superimposed over the image of two opening eyes, symbolic of the individualized gaze, free and critical, naturally asserting itself.

6)



Two open eyes
Logo superimposed
[generic music]

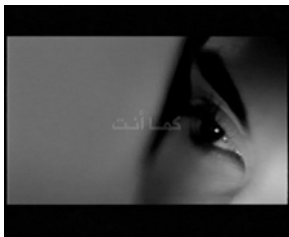
al-Hurra

al-Hurra/the Free

The spot does not end, however, with the conclusion of the list. On a background of the same eyes which are opening anew, the logo of the station is printed--al-Hurra, meaning “the free person” in Arabic, repeating, in a

sense, the previous strophe which is directed to the viewer as a “free” individual. By juxtaposition, the viewer and the channel are aligned with, and assimilated to each other through the symbolism of the eye, which embodies freedom as well as the act of watching television. This strophe draws a parallel between the list and its conclusion and the second part of the equation: “you are free//the Free Person” (“anta Hurr//al-Hurra”).

7)



Two open eyes
Superimposed logo
[generic music]

kamâ anta

like you (yourself)

The 7th and final strophe constitutes a sort of postscript. Once again taking up the image of the opening eyes with text superimposed, this strophe lays out clearly, for those who may not have already grasped it, the parallel established by the spot between the viewer, newly-validated in his individuality, and the channel. It recapitulates the equation: “you are free//The Free Person $\Rightarrow$ [The Free (Person) is free] as you yourself are.” In addition, by doing so, it permits the spot to come full circle stylistically through the quasi-rhythmical repetition of its identical first and last words.

Choosing channels, identifying spots: the work of data collection

This article is the product of a method which consists of not imparting any information about the satellite channels studied beyond what may be inferred from the advertising spots they produce in order to present themselves to their audience and impute an identity to that audience. In a way, the undertaking consists of evaluating the description of naturally accessible empirical data and limiting the reflexivity of the researcher, inasmuch as it would be “an academic virtue and a source of privileged knowledge” (Lynch, 2000).

For all that, we would never claim that the choice of channels and their respective spots was completely unpremeditated and spontaneous. First, it is evident that the collection of data bears the hallmark of what legal experts might call an “insider dealings offence”--the analyst having, in fact, at his disposal, a certain prior knowledge of the Arab media landscape, the ideological orientations of the channels, their sources of financing, and the sociological characteristics of their public. The viewer should not, in any case, be taken for a “media idiot”--an expression inspired by Garfinkel’s “cultural idiot” (1967). In fact, one might reasonably assume that a male or female viewer who turns on the television and chooses one channel rather than another is not ignorant of its general character. Above all, he also has background knowledge to rely upon in determining his preferences and is not simply a passive agent of media communication, ignorant of that of which he is, moreover, the destined object. He is, in this regard, by no means a stranger to himself and the cognitive stakes of telecommunication. To be sure, his way of knowing is not necessarily reflective, which does not automatically imply that it is exterior-- the product of manipulation of an unthinking person by the grand masters of the media. In other words, our adoption of the natural attitude of the viewer looking at these spots should not obscure the fact that the said viewer generally knows what to expect when she views one channel or another and that it is often this knowledge which determines his choice. Thus, even if the collecting of these facts has not been completely blind, the fact that we do not precede the descriptions of the spots with an analysis of the channels should save us from the trap of hyper-reflexivity--that is, determining before the fact the identity of each channel and taking these spots merely as confirmation of a theory already formed through those analyses.

That said, there is no problem in identifying some of the criteria that have implicitly guided our choice of channels and of spots. The first is that of contrast. Reading the three spots clearly shows that the respective styles of al-Jazeera, al-Manar and al-Hurra are very

specific and distinct from one another. The reading of these spots, besides, permits easy access to that which we might call the “natural attitude” of the viewer. Far from placing the researcher in an ironic and intrusive position, the selection and description of these sequences places him, above all, in the ordinary position of a viewer relying on common sense to read that which is given to him and that which he allows himself to see. And, we should add, because they are media products constructed intentionally for the purpose of self-promotion, the spots are relatively simple to read. And because they aim for their own intelligibility, they have recourse to obvious stereotypes--though the spot from al-Jazeera is more complex than the two others.

Anthropology of televised reading: words and images for an endogenous categorization

Rather than to produce an exogenous and a priori typology, which would make these spots seem to be only particular instances of a general model, with everything that implies with respect to the effects of redundancy and ratification of what has already been determined, our purpose here is to render a descriptive account of typologies and categorizations both emerging and endogenous.

The production of identity undertaken in this way rests upon sets of membership categories--that is, of classifications or social types which can be used to describe people, communities, or objects. When these categories are deployed, they form what is called natural collections or categorical systems (Sacks, 1974). One of the chief characteristics of categorical systems of membership resides in the fact that some categories may have qualities or affiliations conventionally imputed to them, which include activities, rights, expectations, obligations, fields of knowledge, attributes and competencies related to the category. In other words, the categorical work is morally and normatively organized. That is, it is organized according to membership

categories of, on the one hand, ontological order (being Arab, Muslim) and, on the other hand, of axiological order (being moral, free, professional, employed).

The spot from al-Jazeera is organized as a sort of nimbus of words and images easily recognizable by an Arab audience. Within a system of juxtaposition of multiple personal testimonies is a categorical environment--varied and contrasting, yet intelligible--which is proposed to the viewer. Associating the denotative registers (land, native country, language, borders, writing, thought, body) and the connotative (speech: dialectal, educated, poetic; voice: young, old, working-class, distinguished), the sequence tends to produce an effect of diversity within unity. This aggregation of multiplicity points towards the tagline of the station, and to pluralism, but specifically to pluralism in the context of a single underlying identity--namely, the Arab identity. In a kaleidoscopic movement, the channel and the viewer find themselves linked to various figures whose experiences of life and feelings of identity allow the gathering up of threads that unify individuals, their community of membership, and the world in which they move.

The spot from al-Manar has a simpler structure. A militant text followed by symbolically strong images leads, by means of a repetitive list of three strophes, to the affirmation of engagement and the presence of the channel at the heart of the Palestinian--and thus the Muslim--cause. The categories deployed in this spot are simple and readable, the metaphorical language is very strong and makes a direct appeal to feelings of identity; the ideology of resistance is projected on the forefront of the scene. No diversity here, but rather support of militant engagement. No complexity, either, but the production of an unmistakable message. Consistent with the symbolism of its name (“al-Manar” means “the beacon”), the station presents itself as the beacon of the Muslim Arab consciousness, standing firm in the storm of events in the region, lighting the way to resistance. It is also a landmark for those engaged in the struggle.

The al-Hurra spot it is presented like an advertisement. With images directed with evident attention to aesthetics, with alternating female and male figures (the first symbolizing the channel to a certain extent), interpellating the viewer very directly and constructed in such a way that the channel seems like his eye and the world or the prism of his gaze, the spot is presented as entertainment in the service of an obvious but implicit ideology. It is not concerned with great questions of current affairs or communal identity, but of a modern individual acting alone, independently of majority trends. It is not so much diversity that is being promoted here, but liberalism and individualism. The community of membership is even presented as an obstacle, the herd instinct against which one must march resolutely. The accessible narrative is simple and directly understandable, seeking to convince by the force of the self-evident (how can one refuse to think, to choose, to express oneself--in short, to be free?). The entertaining pleasure of the image allows one to be carried away by the action. There is no argument, in the strict sense of the word, but an enterprise of seduction which grows out of the accord between the entertaining nature of the spectacle and the validation of the viewer.

Such is the natural intelligibility of these spots that we can account for. As Metz (1974:145) underscores, "what must be understood is that films are understood." Therefore from this evidence (which has, in any case, the merit of having been articulated) we may assume that we are watching a filmed sequence from within a natural attitude, that of everyday life, and we understand it with the resources and means identical to those which we use to understand the order and characteristics of the social and natural world (Jayyusi, 1988:289). Watching television, if we limit ourselves to that aspect of visual sociology which concerns us in this article, is not done in a vacuum, but in a contextual and situated manner. By contextual, we mean that the activity is not independent of the moment and of the place in which it is inscribed; by "situated", we mean that it relies upon the shared background knowledge of the viewers,

that which one might call their culture. The coherence of the spots depends on our "resources of (tele)visual intelligibility," among which are our capacity for identification, for categorization and for inference. The competent viewer recognizes the Dome of the Rock, associates the stonethrower with the Palestinian Intifada, and infers the power of the free actor from the march against the flow of the crowd. The coherence of the televisual text "is not then a formal analytic coherence, but rather an organization of practical objectivities found in scenic recognizability of things like courses of action, visible relationships, familiar routines, etc." (Macbeth, 1999:148). It is then not at all the result of coded operations, but of scenes and activities recognized and understood for what they are by an ordinarily competent viewer. They are reflexively available in our descriptions and accounts, they are the recognizable characteristics of the daily life as it is lived, they are embedded in our ways of seeing and acting. Jayyusi (1988:273) speaks, in this regard, of the "scenic transparency" of the social world and of the images we have of it. That does not mean that no problems of comprehension could remain, but that these very problems form an integral part of the recognizability of the world. Thus, contrary to the commonly-held view, images do not possess an infinite number of meanings. The action possesses its visual coherence and the image is not radically abstract from its viewing context. As Jayyusi (1991:149) likewise shows, one may see in the street a picture of a birthday party and find, in its scenic organization, a "proto-narration" of who these people are, how the scene has come to be what it is, and how it has come to be that for us. The scene offers a limited number of possible interpretations which the viewer will seize upon in relying on resources available to an ordinary member of the usual society of people who might be drawn to look at this type of scene.

We should emphasize here the sequential organization of these televised spots. Far from being only juxtapositions of images operating separately and independently of each other, they form unities made of images, texts and

sounds, of complementarities and contrasts, of logical and dialogic successions and of linear or fragmented projections of propositions of identity. These lead to a single interpretation (al-Manar and al-Hurra) or are suggestive of multiple interpretations (al-Jazeera) in the service of the identity which the channel intends to give itself and to assign to its audience.

Watching a television program is not done as an analytical process, but in a natural attitude grasping the flux of images and of sounds in their continuity and in the unity that they seek to produce (Livingston, 1995). The viewer does not deconstruct each of the strophes of the spots they are watching as an interlude to other programs, but takes them as a whole whose various elements form the basis of intelligibility. Various scenic and contextual clues converge towards the production of this texture of intelligibility of the televised object. These clues and their mutual dependence do not proceed from a single spot, but from the activity consisting of watching the spot. These signs are at once present in the spot and discovered and assembled by the viewer. In other words, the work consisting of watching the spot is a work of searching for the organization of this glance which the spot describes. It is not, on the one hand, the spot, and, on the other, its viewing, in a correspondence more or less total, but one and the same thing--watching-the-spot--that one may conceive as a pair unifying the text and its interpretation (the pair: spot/viewing of the spot). The spot is always embedded within the work of viewing the spot and, at the very centre of this work, it furnishes the elements indicating how it should be interpreted. At the same time, the work of viewing the spot is irremediably embedded in the spot, and it resides in the work consisting of discovering how the spot prescribes the reading it should have. "In this way, a text provides an 'account' of its own reading; the text is a 'reading account,' a story about how its own reading should be done" (Livingston, 1995:15). The work of reading manifests itself as an activity in the transparency, intelligence, ambiguity or the grammatical non-sense of the text and the

extent to which the text is read in this manner. This work is manifested also, practically, in the fact that reading finds, in the text, the reasons to continue in the line of the first steps that are always placed with that in mind. Reading of the spot is a continuing work which relies upon prerequisite competencies, but not on prerequisite knowledge, and it is continuously accomplished within the essential relation of the spot and its watching by the viewer. The reading of televised spots that we have analyzed operates as a search by the viewer for the inductive enterprise of its designer. The texture of the spot induces a direction in the gaze of the viewer and this gaze retrospectively activates the induction operative in the spot. We are able to reach this conclusion from the perspective of the natural and ordinary viewing attitude of every competent reader.

The competent viewer will not have any problem at all in identifying the *genre* to which these spots belong and, moreover, what differentiates them from other programs such as news, video clips, ads, or sports broadcasts. The distinction which he makes results from the "attitudinal" (*Gestalt*) texture of the work of reading. Following Livingston (1995), we shall say that each text provides not only the semantic elements of comprehension, but also the contextual indications of its *genre* and thus of the reading that it should have. Thus, children's literature may deploy multiple contextual indicators and does not avoid repetition, because it is addressed to a reader who is in the process of developing his reading competencies. One may say, in this case, that it "overdetermines" its interpretation. A technical text, for its part, will also use multiple contextual indicators, but it will avoid repetition; it will seem "proportional" to its interpretation. Lastly, a poem, while likewise multiplying its indicators, will have the tendency to fragment, to scatter them, to obscure their relationship to each other. We may say then that it "underdetermines" its reading. The televised spot itself, like children's literature, tends to overdetermine the reading that can be made of it. It multiplies the contextual clues (the images of symbolic places, the types of

voices, the themes), it does not avoid repetition (the “*min* + part of the body” in the al-Manar spot, le “*anta* + verb” in that of al-Hurra, the theme of language in that of al-Jazeera). It proposes a form of argumentation that, by the abundance of elements pointing in one direction, leads to an over-determined conclusion. This being said, the spot provides as well the elements that enable the spectator to distinguish it (and, by the way, to distinguish its designer) from the next one. As we have seen, it would be difficult to confuse the spots from al-Jazeera, al-Manar, and al-Hurra. This has nothing to do with the fact that one knows which channel one is watching, or with the fact that one will have categorized the channels in this or that way, but certainly with the overdetermination in these spots of the channel’s membership categories and of the audience it aims to reach. By the production of sequences linking images and voices--or a text and its many contexts--to the frameworks of experience and to finalities (Barthelemy, 2003) the spot tends to produce an intersubjective feeling of belonging to a group, with the rights and duties which such belonging entail.

Natural reading and instructed reading: when the channels represent themselves on the web

We have stated that, rather than prejudging the nature of the self-presentation which the three Arabic channels are engaged in, we have preferred to respect, as far as possible, the natural attitude of the viewer engaged in reading the programs offered to him. The trajectory which would consist of first being instructed about the channels in order to then analyze the work is, then, the opposite to this process. For example, we could have begun by navigating the Web and searching the sites of the different channels, sites on which, assuredly, they must be presenting themselves and telling about themselves. In any case, the discourses that these stations might have about themselves constitute, in relation to the natural reading which one might have of the spots they produce, so many “instructed readings” (Livingston, 1995).

In situations of interpersonal observation (Sudnow, 1972), when our gaze operates naturally, in action, we seize upon a series of elements produced that can be seen and understood for what they are, and we orient ourselves towards these elements and act according to them. On the other hand, when we take a photograph we orient ourselves in such a way as to select a moment to preserve. What is more, the people we photograph are attentive to the final result of the operation and thus to the appearance which will be there at the moment it is taken. In other words, looking at a situation captured by a photograph (for example, six photos breaking down the stride of an athlete) does not amount to looking at the natural unfolding of this situation (the athlete who is running, in our example). To look at the photographs is to look at a description of the action of running (Livingston, 1995:78). The photographs are a fixed moment of continuing actions, they represent them, they take the place of them. One could say that, in the case of photographs, we are dealing with an instructed gaze, that is to say a gaze for which the total of possible readings is limited and channelled by the considered and organized intention of the photograph. If we turn now to the written text, we may make the same sort of argument. For an ordinarily competent reader, reading any text whatsoever is accomplished starting from the elements of analysis emerging naturally from the text being read. Literary critique, on its part, proposes an informed reading of the same text, which we have called instructed reading (Livingston, 1995).

The pages on which these three channels present themselves on their respective websites suggest, with respect to the spots we have analyzed, an instructed reading of that which the viewer may seize upon when she views them in a natural process. These pages give us a reflexive definition of the identity of the channel, of its project, and of the public to which it is addressed. These pages function as representatives, interpreters and decoders of the undertaking in which the channel they present is engaged. They serve as a *proxy* for the channel.

In other words, there is a great difference between the impression a televised spot may have upon the viewer engaged in a natural reading of the show which has been offered to him and that produced by the reflexive attitude which the editing and reading of a web page assumes. It is important for the analyst to account in every possible way for the mechanisms operative in the inductive work of these spots. But this accounting must be done in such a way that what is revealed has more to do with what the viewer may grasp in watching the spot than what the researcher is able to find out in investigating--here, there, and everywhere--the immediate and spontaneous understanding that an ordinary audience might have of it.

We should add that the choice of language of presentation on the web is not neutral. In effect, the fact that the use of English makes the object of a page more or less specific and that the content of this page differs to some degree from that of its Arabic equivalent clearly indicates that, for the designers of this site, the people likely to surf the Web and to consult the site correspond to different audiences and may feel a different need to see an explanation of what the channel is. The English page on the Website is addressed then to visitors seeking information in English, the Arabic page to different visitors doubtless corresponding more to the actual audience of the channel. Though the spots themselves are intended for the audience of the channel who, in the expectation of the broadcasting of programs (to which the spots form a sort of interlude), may enjoy a form of entertainment which reinforces what the channel itself wants to say about itself, repeats what the said public knows about the channel (or at least what the designer of the spots think they know about the channel) and ratifies the viewer's choice of this channel rather than another.

1)



من نحن

Independence, pluralism and professionalism

The al-Jazeera site targets Arabic-speaking as well as English-speaking audiences. Two different pages are thus dedicated to the presentation of the channel. The more detailed one is formulated in English--another, more succinct, in Arabic. Here is what we may read on the latter:

The satellite channel al-Jazeera: the vision and the project

Al-Jazeera is an audiovisual service of Arab affiliation and global orientation whose slogan is one opinion and the other opinion. It is a pluralist forum which aspires to truth and respects professional principles within an institutional framework.

If al-Jazeera is active in arousing public consciousness to matters which interest the whole world, it aspires to be a bridge between peoples and cultures which promotes human rights and the knowledge and values of tolerance, democracy, of respect for freedom and for human rights.

The themes of pluralism, truth and professionalism are explicitly mentioned in this text. In addition, there is the promotion of humanist values. It is good to note that following this summary presentation, the Arabic site proposes a "pact of professional honor" (*mîthâq al-sharaf al-mihanî*) and a "guide for professional behaviour" (*dalîl al-sulûk al-mihanî*).

The English page is organized, for its part, around several central topics. First of all it is the history of the channel, presented as the first of its kind in the Arab world, which has put itself forward as a source of pride, greatness and legitimacy. Al-Jazeera presents itself as at once independent and unable to be ignored.

Aljazeera has come a long way since it was launched in November 1996.

Today the channel that sent shockwaves through the whole Arab world from its very first day on air has become a global name which people, governments, and decision-makers cannot afford to ignore.

With more than 30 bureaus and dozens of correspondents covering the four corners of the world Aljazeera has given millions of people a refreshing new perspective on global events.

It is an English-speaking Arab audience targeted here, which is presented as having the right to benefit from information

independent not only of the censorship of the United States, but also with of the stereotypes conveyed outside of the Arab world.

Free from the shackles of censorship and government control Aljazeera has offered its audiences in the Arab world much needed freedom of thought, independence, and room for debate. In the rest of the world, often dominated by the stereotypical thinking of news «heavyweights», Aljazeera offers a different and a new perspective.

The inverse of those media dominated by prejudices, al-Jazeera aims to offer coverage of the news which is balanced and objective, but also bears the mark of professionalism. The means necessary to this end have been mobilized, which has sometimes allowed the channel to outclass its competitors.

Aljazeera's correspondents opened a window for the world on the millennium's first two wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Our expanded coverage competed with and sometimes outperformed our competitors bringing into the spotlight the war's devastating impact on the lives of ordinary people.

We continue to cover all viewpoints with objectivity integrity and balance.

So now when Aljazeera speaks, the world listens and «reads».

Freedom of speech is intrinsic to the philosophy of the channel. And it is the pluralism of ideas and opinions that the channel aims to encourage, echoing its tagline, «one opinion and the other opinion.»

Aljazeera.net is the online version of the same Aljazeera.

The website promises to raise traditionally sidelined questions and issues. It upholds the same philosophy of the mother organisation: «The right to speak up». This translates into allowing everyone to express their opinion freely, encouraging debates, viewpoints and counter viewpoints.

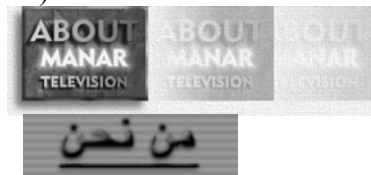
Finally, the channel emphasizes its engagement with a program of truth. A multiplicity of sources and the pluralism of opinion and truth are presented as the two faces of an objective that is declined in the singular: *the* truth.

Our team of dedicated journalists with their multi-national education and diversified backgrounds share a common set of attributes: **objectivity, accuracy, and a passion for truth.**

Truth will be the force that will drive us to raise thorny issues, to seize every opportunity for exclusive reporting, to take hold of unforgettable moments in history and to rekindle the willpower within every human being who strives for truth.

It is possible to argue that, if the English page is more detailed than the Arabic page, it is doubtless because, for the website designers, the non Arabic-speaking public is more likely to feel the need to see explained what al-Jazeera is.

2)



The Islamic beacon of resistance and moral revival

The site of al-Manar likewise intends to target the Arabic- and English-speaking audiences. Each of the two versions offers a page dedicated to the presentation of the channel. Their content is, in part, different. Here is what one may read on the Arabic page:

Who are we?

Al-Manar is an audiovisual channel which began to broadcast over the airwaves in 1991 and by means of satellite in 2000. The station is addressed to Arabs and to Muslims in all the regions of the world, in an open, consensual discourse. It pursues political objectives. What moves it toward that, is a great ambition for cooperative construction--construction of a better future for Arab and Islamic generations and societies throughout the world, by means of reorientation around conciliatory religious values and the development of the culture of dialogue, of meeting and cooperation among the faithful of revealed religions and human civilizations. The channel is centered on the very remarkable worth of man and this centering serves as an axis for the revelations which aim to protect his dignity, his liberty and the development of the spiritual and moral dimensions of his personality. The station avoids dealing with events and subjects of a vulgar type in order to concentrate with objectivity on the construction of valid questions and of greatest interest for the whole Community of believers, all the while placing emphasis in the broadcasting of its news programs on the ethical criteria of the journalistic profession recognized by internationally established laws and traditions. In this way it has been able, in a short time, to occupy a central place in the space of Arab media and to polarize a very large mass of Arab viewers within the country as well as outside it; in this

way it has appeared as the most accurate expression of Arab and Muslim life. Al-Manar is a member of the Union of Broadcasters of the Arab countries of the League of Arab States.

We notice first that the Arabic text identifies the audience of the channel as "Arabs and Muslims of the whole world." Furthermore it emphasizes its work of promoting religious and ethical values. Finally, it emphasizes its professionalism and its concern for objectivity.

On its English page, al-Manar presents itself as a voice that, in the name of God, will be a distinctive one in the Lebanese media landscape.

In His Name Be He Exalted

June 3, 1991 was not an ordinary date at all, for it witnessed the birthday of an extraordinary TV station that has promised to be different, compared to the general visual media in Lebanon

This alternative voice is justified, the text of the page continues, by the weakness of other media faced with the Israeli occupation of Lebanese and the Palestinian territories, and with the suffering which accompanies the legitimate resistance which they give rise to.

There have been a lot of visual media in that country that had just emerged from a destructive civil war and that has a detested Israeli occupation on 20% of its small soil (10452 Km) ; none of these TV networks, however, really shouldered the concern of the occupied parts in the South and West Bekaa whether in giving the resistance activity its right in the media or in true sympathy with the suffering of the occupied territories ; therefore, it has not been strange for the South and Bekaa to be inflaming with the fire of Israeli aggression while singers chant on numerous TV channels simultaneously. There had to be a TV that committed itself to put in images the suffering of our people in the occupied territories, the victims of Israeli arrogance, and that of those living in areas bordering the occupation who suffer its semi-daily aggressions, besides focusing on the Resistance activity and establishing its role, hoping to formulate a resistance-nation governed by justice and equality; thus Manar saw the light of day.

This being the case, the channel presents itself also as the place of the spiritual movement against western decadence, depraved customs and apology for violence, of which other

Lebanese media would make themselves the champions and propagators.

Despite its huge burden on every Lebanese, the occupation was not the one and only concern. Lebanese TV channels have been overwhelmed by a trend of movies and programs that can only be described as immoral. At the time when the Lebanese - such as any people coming out of a devastating civil war - needed what could erase the effects of that conflict and work on building the personality of good citizenship, numerous TV channels have been broadcasting programs that would decay one's ethics and provoke his or her instincts in addition to instigating violence and identifying with western living patterns which are quite remote from our Islamic and Eastern values and culture. Here, once again, there was a desperate need for a channel that parents would be reassured when they knew their children were watching; then Manar was there

The agenda of al-Manar is presented, then, on both exterior and interior fronts at once. In this respect, the theme of social justice occupies an important place.

In addition to that, Manar has not stayed aloof from the suffering of the Lebanese throughout the country ; on the contrary, it has involved in public affair information, brought out the suffering and deprivation of our people and spoken out for solving their social, economical and educational problems. It has also criticized injustice and corruption in the country, demanding the achievement of the justice and equality state.

Besides, the channel also wishes to see itself as a source of ethical entertainment

In addition to that, Manar has not stayed aloof from the suffering of the Lebanese throughout the country [...] Furthermore, Manar TV observes the cultural activity [...] without forgetting the youth and their interests, focusing on constructive entertainment programs for them in addition to many sports programs [...] - away from moral decay and direct them towards formulating better personality.

Al-Manar does not hide its religious engagement--quite the contrary. Its intent is to be a militant channel serving as a guide inspired by religious Law, *shari'a*.

Manar stays, as its name, a guide and usher that draws its principles and laws from the magnanimous Sharia to come out every day and be seen by those who are eager to know the truth and entertain themselves with something that would not draw the anger of the

Almighty or contribute in corrupting them and their children. A vow taken and will be kept, inshAllah.

The fact that these pages on which al-Manar presents itself differ somewhat according to the language of expression shows only that the intent of the designers varies according to the public that it aims to address. Whereas, in Arabic, this audience is principally mobilized around religious and national values, it is resistance and religious and moral values that the English page promotes. It is, then, not the channel's usual audience that is targeted on the English page, but certainly those who would be searching for information concerning it.

3)

WELCOME TO ALHURRA

الحرّة ترحب بكم

When the American people offer free choice

The webpage of al-Hurra on which the channel presents itself is the only one of the three pages to be published simultaneously in the two languages--English and Arabic. The al-Hurra site is very little developed. Essentially, it aims to publish the programs. The English and Arabic texts are identical. The designers of the page also feel the need to explain the nature of their enterprise to the Arabic-speaking audience of the channel and to those searching for information in English.

The channel presents itself as focused mainly on the production of news and of information, at the same time not neglecting broadcasts of entertainment.

Alhurra (Arabic for "The Free One") is a commercial-free Arabic-language satellite television network for the Middle East devoted primarily to news and information. In addition to reporting on regional and international events, the channel broadcasts discussion programs, current affairs magazines and features on a variety of subjects including health and personal fitness, entertainment, sports, fashion, and science and technology

Engaged in the production of accurate and balanced information, al-Hurra assigns itself the mission of broadening the horizons of the

viewers and thus giving them the possibility of making informed choices.

The channel is dedicated to presenting accurate, balanced and comprehensive news. Alhurra endeavors to broaden its viewers' perspectives, enabling them to make more informed decisions.

Finally, the al-Hurra page mentions briefly its source of financing--namely, the US Congress, which it presents as the agent of the American people. In any case, the text continues, this does not impinge on the independence and the professional integrity of its journalists.

Alhurra is operated by a non-profit corporation called "The Middle East Television Network, Inc." (MTN). MTN is financed by the American people through the U.S. Congress. MTN receives this funding from the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), an independent and autonomous Federal agency. The BBG serves as a firewall to protect the professional independence and integrity of the broadcasters.

Conclusion

The "self-presentations" which these three channels carry out are a projection of their own identity as well as the identity of those whom they claim to address. Relying on different scenes, situations, problems, incidents, news items, investigations, attitudes or events marking the life of every society, to which they strive to give, explicitly or implicitly, a signification, these spots are creators of ontologically subjective, but epistemologically objective identities (Searle, 1995). By "ontologically subjective," we mean that these spots seem to answer the questions, "Who am I?" and "Who are you?" By "epistemologically objective," we mean that these identities so created attain a degree of obviousness outside of individual interpretation. In other words, the channels produce the objectivity of their own identity and that of their public ("we know whom we are addressing and they know whom they are watching").

Analysis of questions of identity, belief, and behaviour is largely dominated by Habermassian inquiries concerning the public sphere. However, far from constituting a

sociological tool, these amount to a normative conception of the public space. We, on the other hand, have taken an approach that aims to describe exactly what happens when specific actors orient themselves contextually toward a specific public. (For a critique of the Habermasian conception, see Bogen, 1999)

Reality is inescapably mundane (Pollner, 1987), which means that, contrary to what Baudrillard claims, appearances are real (Bjelic, 1999) in the sense that what people say in certain circumstances is certainly what they want to say. But the preference is entirely contingent upon the circumstances, since no position exists detached from context. This epistemological orientation has the advantage of permitting one to argue that discourses should be considered distinctively as “circumstantialized” discourses intended for certain audiences in specific contexts. In brief, we might argue that discourses are oriented toward *audiences* rather than toward *an* audience and, above all, that they are oriented toward the audience that they ascribe to themselves, which constitutes a virtual community (Livet, 1994). The discourses are real, the audience is virtual: it is the audience which one wishes to address or the audience that one imagines.

We should, in addition, emphasize that identities are closely linked to courses of action and to the orientation of interactants toward a public at once specific and virtual, since it is seen through a self-evident set of categorizations. The public of a mosque is thus composed of “muslims”, the “Arab” public of “Arabs,” in such a way that it is the referent of the discourse that “modalizes” identity. Taking into account the dialogic and polyphonic nature of discourse, several identities may be put into play in the same sequence: Arab identity, Islamic identity, modernity (in the sense of a discourse based on the rights of man and international law) may follow one another easily from one sentence to the other. These identities become contextually relevant according to the discursive performances in which they are inserted (Matoesian, 2001:108). It is proper then, first of all, to consider referents of

identity only from within the discourses oriented toward them rather than to consider them as the clearly identified source of discourses (Moerman, 1974). It is necessary, further, to not consider identities as expressing a global, in effect civilizational position, regarding questions that are themselves globally perceived. Attention brought to bear on the completely contextualized dynamic of discourses, the orientation toward different audiences in the course of each one, and their dialogic and polyphonic character, should thus show clearly the illusory nature of every interpretation. On the other hand, such an investigation should also show the relationship, growing ever closer, among sets of categorizations used, the audience toward which the discourse is oriented, and the media through which it passes--that is to say, the specification of audiences according to contingent and circumstantial criteria.

References

- Atkinson, J. Maxwell (1984) *Our Masters' Voices: The Language and Body Language of Politics* London: Routledge
- Barthélémy, Michel (2003) “Temporal perspectives in the practical-textual handling of a European public problem” *Social Science Information* 42(3): 403-430
- Bjelic, Dušan (1999) “‘Frenching’ the ‘Real’ and Praxeological Therapy: An Ethnomethodological Clarification of the French Theory of Media” in P. Jalbert (ed.), *Media Studies: Ethnomethodological Approaches*. Lanham, New York, Oxford: University Press of America
- Bogen, D. (1999) *Order Without Rules: Critical Theory and the Logic of Conversation* New York: SUNY Press
- Garfinkel, Harold (1967) *Studies in Ethnomethodology* Cambridge: Polity Press
- Jalbert, Paul (1999) “Critique and Analysis in Media Studies: Media Criticism as Practical Action” in P. Jalbert (ed.), *Media Studies:*

Ethnomethodological Approaches Lanham, New York, Oxford: University Press of America

Jayyusi, Lena (1988) "Towards a Socio-logic of the Film Text" *Semiotica* 68(3-4): 271-296

Jayyusi, Lena (1991) "The reflexive nexus: Photo-practice and natural history" *Continuum: The Australian Journal of Media & Culture* 6(2) [Internet]

Livingston, Eric (1995) *An Anthropology of Reading* Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press

Livet, Pierre (1994) *La communauté virtuelle. Action et communication* Combas: Editions de l'éclat

Lynch, Michael (2000) "Against Reflexivity as an Academic Virtue and Source of Privileged Knowledge" *Theory, Culture & Society* 17(3): 26-54

Macbeth, Douglas (1999) "Glances, Trances, and Their Relevance for a Visual Sociology" in P. Jalbert (ed.) *Media Studies: Ethnomethodological Approaches* Lanham, New York, Oxford: University Press of America

Matoesian, Gregory (2001) *Law and the Language of Identity: Discourse in the William Kennedy Smith Rape Trial* New York: Oxford University Press

Metz, C. (1974) *Language and Cinema* The Hague: Mouton

Moerman, Michael (1974) "Accomplishing Ethnicity" in Roy Turner (ed.) *Ethnomethodology* Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd [réimpression de « Being Lue: uses and abuses of ethnic identification », in June Helm (ed.), *Essays on the Problem of Tribe* Washington: University of Washington Press, 1968]

Pollner, Melvin (1987) *Mundane Reason: Reality in Everyday and Sociological*

Discourse Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Sacks, Harvey (1974) "On the analyzability of stories by children" in Roy Turner (ed.) *Ethnomethodology* Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd

Searle, John R. (1995) *The Construction of Social Reality* London: Penguin Books

Previous Issues of Ethnographic Studies

Issue Number One (1997)

The Unattached Society, by Edward Rose
Prologue, by Rod Watson

Issue Number Two (1997)

Worldly Interpretations of a Suspicious Story, by Jon Driessen
A Sociology of Knowledge Machine, by Michael Lynch
A Sociological Theory of Justice, by Stanley Raffel
Clerking Mental Health Cases, by Paul Ramcharan

Issue Number Three (1998) (Thematic Issue Mind and Society)

Guest Introduction, by Rupert Read
Can We See Things That Are Not There?, by Jeff Coulter
Experimentation in the Social Sciences: Cultural Dope or Reflexive Agent? A Reflexive Critique of Ethnomethodology, by Nigel Pleasants
On Common Sense, Moore and Wittgenstein, by Kelly Jolley
Dennett's Dangerous Ideas: Elements of a Critique of Cognitivism, by Anne Jacobson

Issue Number Four (1999)

One Step Forward and Two Steps Back: Woolgar, Reflexivity, Qualitative Research and a Line Dancing Class, by Russel Kelly
Analysing the Physical: An Ethnomethodological Study of Boxing, by Sally Coates
Chomskian Linguistics: God's Truth or Hocus Pocus?, by D.J. Hatch
Driving in Forests and Mountains: A Pure and Applied Ethnography, by Rod Watson
The Works of Edward Rose: A Bibliography, by Andrew Carlin

Issue Number Five (2000)

The Ethno-Inquiries of Edward Rose, by Roger S. Slack
Conversation Analysis, Practitioner Based Research, Reflexivity and Reflective Practice: Some Exploratory Remarks, by William Housley and Richard Fitzgerald
Category Play in a School Staff-Room, by Stephen Hester and David Francis
Interruptions, by Peter Eglin
Preparations for Voluntary Death: The Social Organisation of Suicidal Concerns, by Oleg Vetlugin

Issue Number Six (Special Issue on Workplace Studies, edited by Max Travers and Dave Calvey) (2001)

Introduction, by Max Travers and Dave Calvey
Of Ethnography, Ethnomethodology and Workplace Studies, by John Hughes
On the Practical Availability of Work-Practice, by Andy Crabtree
Ethnography, Ethnomethodology and Interaction Analysis, by Dave Randall, Liz Marr and Mark Rouncefield
Representing Time: The Humble Timesheet, by Barry Brown
Ethnography in Public Space: Competence, Communication and the Research Process, by Ged Murtagh
Work, Technology and the Small Office, by Max Travers

Issue Number Seven (2002) (Special Issue Howard Schwartz: Published and Unpublished Papers, Guest Editor: Alex Dennis)

Howard Schwartz: An Introduction, by Alex Dennis and Wes Sharrock
Data: Who needs it?
General Features
Phenomenological Reductionism
Towards a Phenomenology of Projection Errors
Understanding Misunderstanding
The Psychotherapy of Automobile Repair
The What's New Problem
The Logic of First Impressions

Issue Number Eight (2006)

Remarks on Certain Essential Problems Involved in the Analysis of Visual Data: A Case Study, by Mike Ball
Running-Together: Some Ethnomethodological Considerations, by Jacquelyn Allen Collinson
Sequencing in Media Dialogical Networks, by Jiri Nekvapil and Ivan Leudar
Enquiries into Newscasts: The Discursive Organisation of Televised Criticism and Debate, by Michel Barthélémy

Copies of all issues are available from:

Dave Francis, Department of Sociology, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester M13 6LL, UK