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CONSTRUCTIONS OF THE ISLAMIC PERIL IN
ENGLISH-LANGUAGE CANADIAN PRINT MEDIA:
DISCOURSES ON POWER AND VIOLENCE

by

Karim H. Karim (c) 1996

Graduate Program in Communication

McGill University, Montreal

May 1996

A thesis submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of the
requirements of the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
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To Rosemin.
Abstract

Author: Karim H. Karim
Title: Constructions of the Islamic Peril in English-Language Canadian Print Media: Discourses on Power and Violence
Department: Graduate Program in Communication
Degree: Doctorate in Philosophy

This is an inquiry into cultural constructions of "Islamic violence" in dominant Northern discourses. Mainstream Canadian journalism's participation in these discourses is analyzed within the context of its cultural and structural integration into global media networks. Media materials are scrutinized using critical discourse, dramatistic, and ritual analysis methodologies. The thesis follows Hamid Mowlana's suggestion that inquiries into international communication flows should move beyond traditional paradigms of inter-national relations (in which nation-states are the primary objects of study) to consider intra- and transnational participants as well.

Borrowing from Jacques Ellul, this study examines the importance of myth as a fundamental basis of communication. However, unlike Ellul, it also explores alternatives to the operations of dominant communication structures. Edward Said's critique of Orientalism informs the analysis of Northern portrayals of Muslim societies; but the dissertation attempts to avoid overstating the Orientalist discourses' hegemony by proposing a model of competition among dominant, oppositional and alternative discourses on "Islam."
Mainstream media's adherence to dominant technological myths and their general reticence about the structural and direct violence of elite states are examined. Distinct similarities are found between the utopic orientations and technical operations of dominant Northern and Muslim discourses, as well as in Jewish, Christian and Muslim conceptions of holy/just war. The proliferation of contemporary Northern images about "Islam" are traced historically to four primary stereotypes about Muslims.

Examinations of the supposedly objective and secularist media reportage on terrorism show differences in portrayal according to the perpetrators' religions. Analyses of the coverage of wars involving peoples of Muslim backgrounds in the Middle East, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the former USSR demonstrate the tendency of dominant journalistic scripts to attribute diverse political, economic and territorial conflicts to a monolithic "Islam." The dissertation traces how the global media narrative's transformation of Saddam Hussein from an ally of the West to a demonic despot was aided by according him "Islamic" characteristics. It also looks at the emergence of "Islam" as a post-Cold War Other. Lastly, proposals made by scholars and journalists for enhancing inter-cultural communication between Northern and Muslim societies are considered.
Le document explore les constructions culturelles de la «violence islamique» dans les discours dominant des pays du Nord. La contribution du journalisme canadien à ces discours est analysée dans le contexte de son intégration culturelle et sociale aux réseaux médiatiques mondiaux. Des documents émanant des médias sont passés au peigne fin à l'aide des méthodes du discours critique, de l'analyse dramatisée et de l'analyse rituelle. L'auteur adhère à l'idée proposée par Hamid Mowlana selon laquelle l'examen de la masse des communications internationales devrait aller au-delà des paradigmes traditionnels des relations inter-nationales (dans lesquelles les États-nations constituent les principaux objets de l'étude) pour considérer tout aussi bien les intervenants intra- et trans-nationaux.

Empruntant à Jacques Ellul, cette étude examine l'importance du mythe comme base fondamentale de communication. Toutefois, elle explore également d'autres choix de fonctionnement des structures dominantes de communication. La critique de l'Orientalisme faite par Edward Said éclaire l'analyse de l'image qu'ont les pays du Nord des sociétés musulmanes. Cependant, le traitement tente d'éviter...
de surestimer l'hégémonie des interprétations des orientalistes en proposant un modèle de concurrence entre les discours dominant, d'opposition et alternatif sur l'«Islam».


L'examen des comptes rendus soi-disant objectifs et sécularisés diffusés dans les médias sur le terrorisme fait ressortir les différences dans la façon de dépeindre les événements selon la religion à laquelle adhèrent les agresseurs. L'analyse de la couverture de presse des guerres mettant aux prises des populations d'origine musulmane au Moyen-Orient, en Bosnie-Herzégovine et dans les républiques de l'union soviétique montre la tendance des journalistes adhérant au discours dominant à attribuer divers conflits politiques, économiques et territoriaux à un «Islam» monolithique. L'étude relève comment les médias du monde entier ont pu transformer Saddam Hussein, au départ décrit comme un allié de l'Occident, pour en faire un despote diabolique en lui attribuant des caractéristiques «islamiques». Elle examine également l'émergence de l'«Islam» sous la forme d'Autre de l'après-guerre froide. Enfin, l'auteur se penchent sur les
idées avancées par des chercheurs et des journalistes pour améliorer les communications interculturelles entre les sociétés musulmanes et celles des pays du Nord.
We must all be aware of the extraordinary, perhaps insuperable, difficulty of assessing the quality of a culture of which we are a part or of assessing the quality of a culture of which we are not a part. In using other cultures as mirrors in which we may see our own culture we are affected by the astigma of our own eyesight and the defects of the mirror, with the result that we are apt to see nothing in other cultures but the virtues of our own.

Harold A. Innis, *The Bias of Communication* (1951)
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Preface

This document was written during a turbulent period of history that continually challenged theoretical assumptions regarding international relations and international news flows. The centrifugal forces that caused the break-up of the Eastern Bloc and of Yugoslavia were reciprocated by the emergence of the United States as the unitary superpower, the coming together of diverse governments in a United Nations Coalition against Iraq, the consolidation of the European Union, moves towards reconciliation in South Africa, the Middle East and Northern Ireland, the "globalization" of markets, the rise of CNN as the supplier of "live" television news around the world, and the advent of the "Global Information Society." However, one would be mistaken in believing that these seemingly momentous events are leading inexorably towards the millennial utopia envisioned by Marshall McLuhan. Communication networks in the "global village," such as it is, continue to favour linkages between domestic elites and are concentrated primarily in elite nations. Even the miracle of the Internet has only succeeded in inter-connecting only those who have access to relatively sophisticated computers, thus excluding the vast majority of humanity.

In any case, technological advances do not guarantee international, inter-cultural harmony. It seems that the growth of communications links between Northern and Muslim societies has been paralleled by the increasing misperception. Such misperceptions are fed by historical stereotypes of each other and the ongoing manipulation of information on both sides. This dissertation
examines how Northern mass media, from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s, ideologically constructed events in which the North was perceived to be in conflict with "Islam." The overwhelming communications superiority of Northern powers ensures that their worldviews remained dominant. In expanding their cultural, economic and military influence in developing countries, they will continue to face resistance from their inhabitants, including Muslims. Judging by current trends, Northern mass media will describe the latter - regardless of their philosophical and tactical orientations - as "Islamic fundamentalists." The pliability of the largely negative Northern images of "Islam" enables propagandists to press them into service to demonize significant challenges from Muslim societies.

These tendencies are in danger of being exacerbated by the growing extremism among many Muslims frustrated by the failure of their own political leaders to ensure the basic necessities of life and human rights. Potential Islamists are frequently induced into militancy by demagogues quoting scripture out of context to offer simplistic (but vengeful) solutions to life's problems. The rapid rise in the Muslim populations will also increase the probability of confrontations with inimical Northern interests. Terrorism and other atrocities will continue to be justified in the name of "Islam" by the few who carry them out - claims which Northern journalists will generally accept at face value, as they have done before.

The beliefs of hundreds of millions of Muslims who view their religion as a path to harmony with fellow human beings and with nature will probably continue to be disregarded by Northern observers. Fear mongers who foretell the emergence
of "Islamic fundamentalism" as the major threat to global stability in the 21st century possibly stand to be perversely gratified by the self-fulfilment of their prophecies. Speaking at the end of the millennium, they suggest no alternatives - only offering apocalyptic visions of great confrontations between the righteous North and the evil Muslim. Media focus remains on the extremists on both sides as their mutual fear feeds on each others' mirror images about "the Great Satan."

In all likelihood, an Armageddon-like showdown will not take place between Northern powers and "Islam." However, the reservoir of negative Northern images of Muslims will probably continue to justify the stream of individual incidents of harassment as well as military actions. This dissertation studies the manners in which such acts have been rationalized by propagandists. It also explores ways in which journalists can attempt to avoid framing their accounts of the Other in stereotypical images and foster genuine understanding through "other ways of telling."

The major global upheavals and realignments that occurred in the composition of this dissertation provided an opportunity to test the validity of the thesis's primary assumptions - the fundamental role of myth in communication, the dominance of the nation-state in hegemonic discourses, and the consistently negative treatment of "Islam" in the international media. The particular set of technological myths used as an analytical framework proved useful in explaining ongoing developments; despite the centripetal forces of globalization, the nation-state was found to remain the primary locus in which political elites optimize their
power, and despite some Northern opinion leaders' modulation of their negative views about "Islam" dominant discourses still present it as a primary source of global instability. Therefore, even though particular aspects of the Northern powers' relationship with Muslim societies will inevitably change with time, the analytical framework of this thesis could remain useful for future studies of Northern media coverage of "Islam."
Acknowledgements

A number of individuals and institutions provided assistance during the extended period in which I wrote this dissertation. Professor George Szanto was a continual source of support and guidance. His trust in my abilities inspired the confidence that was crucial for the long haul. George was willing to take a chance on a student without formal training in communication studies; he provided constant encouragement as I mapped my way through a completely new set of epistemological assumptions. His forbearance during my long periods of silence allowed me to develop an effective rhythm of working on the dissertation, within the parameters of family duties, community obligations and a full-time job.

Professor Gertrude Robinson was also instrumental in my understanding of the field. Her meticulous elucidation of communication theories and methodologies, particularly in the field of international news flows, equipped me with the necessary tools to investigate the subject at hand and to carry out media analyses.

My stint as a news agency journalist afforded the opportunity to understand the mechanics governing the construction of media messages. The guidance received from Antoine Char of Inter Press Service and from Allan Armstrong and Gerry Loughran of Compass News Features is much appreciated. Participation in The Ottawa Citizen's Readers' Council also allowed insight into the workings of a daily newspaper.
Discussions with Dr. Zayn Kassam-Hann, now teaching at Pomona College in California, and Dr. Amyn Sajo provided opportunities to sound out ideas and shape the dissertation. Comments by Professor Stephen Riggins of the Memorial University of Newfoundland on a section of the thesis submitted for publication helped sharpen some rough edges. Professor Issa Boullata of the Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill University gave valuable suggestions on the penultimate draft. I would also like to thank the external examiner, Professor John Sigler of Carleton University, for consenting to read the dissertation.

Roger Butt, Ned Ellis, Ajit Mehat, Renée Joyal, and Greg Gauld, my successive supervisors in the Canadian federal public service, kindly agreed to pay for a part of my educational expenses out of their training budgets, and permitted time off for travel from Ottawa to Montreal. My work with them has helped me see the multiplicity of discourses that exist even in government. I was in receipt of a generous scholarship from the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, during the earlier part of my enrolment at the Graduate Program in Communication.

Lise Ouimet was a vital link to the Program; her cheerful voice on the telephone assured me for many years of my continued good standing at McGill University. The assistance of Adriana Carabin, Josée Prevost and Jocelynne Lachapelle at the Department of Canadian Heritage’s library is also much appreciated.
To my children, Imran and Irshad, I offer profound apologies for the sunny days that were spent indoors, and to my wife, Rosemin, my deepest thanks for making this task much less arduous than it would have been.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge that nothing is possible without the presence of Spirit.
Introduction
Engineering Consensus

This thesis addresses the portrayal of political violence, specifically "Islamic violence," in the dominant discourses. In so far as the perceptions of all phenomena are culturally constructed, it analyses cultural constructions of violence.¹ The nature of this task requires an interdisciplinary approach. The facility with which communication and cultural studies borrow from a range of social sciences and humanities allows this dissertation to benefit from contributions made by anthropologists, political scientists, sociologists and historians as well as scholars of comparative religion and Islamic studies. Work done in the study of mass media, international news flows, propaganda, myth, violence, terrorism, and international relations helps in building the theoretical foundation. Critical discourse, dramatistic, and ritual analysis methodologies are used to scrutinize media materials. The search for alternative approaches is based on proposals made by scholars from various disciplines and by journalists.

The participation of mainstream Canadian journalism in the dominant Northern discourses on "Islamic violence" is analyzed in the following manner. First, the thesis looks at the mythology underlying basic assumptions about the place of violence in technological society and the mass media's adherence to these assumptions; then it studies Muslim discourses on technological myths and on violence; next, the place of violence in traditional Northern images of the Muslim is considered; following that, the dissertation analyzes Canadian mass media's constructions of "Islamic terrorism," certain conflicts between people of Muslim
and Christian or Jewish backgrounds, and the place of "Islam"² in the post-Cold War era; finally, possibilities for enhancing inter-cultural communication between Northern and Muslim societies are explored.

I hope to make a contribution to communication studies by tracing cultural constructions of political violence in an international, inter-cultural context by the mass media of a Northern country that is not a primary actor in the intermittent conflict between Northern and Muslim societies. Rather than study the content of elite newspapers such as The New York Times, The Times (London) or Le Monde, this dissertation studies the integration of the Canadian press into international news networks. I attempt to demonstrate how Canadian journalism participates culturally in global media narratives on "Islamic violence." Whereas portrayals of Muslims have been studied previously³ there has not been a specific treatment of "Islamic violence" from an international, inter-cultural communication perspective.

Rather than using the empiricist approaches which have failed to realize that "power in national and international systems involves more than just the reallocation of economic, political, and technological values and bases" (Mowlana, 1986: 179), the present study looks at the symbolic construction and utilization of messages - processes that are vital in culturally establishing authority and legitimacy. This dissertation follows Hamid Mowlana's suggestion that inquiries into international communication flows should move beyond the traditional parameters of inter-national relations where nation-states are the
primary objects of study to the broader range of intra- and transnational participants (ibid: 203-204). However, since this is not a comprehensive investigation of communication between Muslim and Northern societies, it does not systematically analyze all the elements and processes of international information flows.  

My critique of Northern depictions of Muslim societies is indebted to Edward Said (1978, 1981); but I attempt to avoid overstating the hegemony of Orientalist discourses by proposing a model of competition between dominant, oppositional and alternative discourses on "Islam." Borrowing from the work of Jacques Ellul (1964, 1969), the thesis also explores the importance of myth as the fundamental basis of cultural constructions and of communication. However, unlike Ellul, who does not explore alternatives to dominant communication structures, the concluding discussion goes on to seek possibilities for better understanding of the Self and the Other. 

It is important to state from the outset that the intention here is not to indulge in apologetics on the behalf either of those who carry out political violence or of "Islam," but to analyze the discursive manners in which images of the "Islamic peril" are constructed. The dissertation explores the cultural and sociological causes for conflicts between Northern and Muslim societies. While it views violence as an ubiquitous human phenomenon prevalent in all cultures, it does not seek to justify atrocities through cultural relativism. The terrorist acts carried out by people who see themselves acting in the name of the state,
communism, freedom, democracy, "Islam" or any other cause are all reprehensible. Since the aim of this dissertation is to show how dominant media discourses generally highlight "Islamic violence" and at the same time downplay the direct and structural violence of Northern powers against the South, I will provide a series of examples of such tendencies. Even though this may, at times, give the erroneous impression that I condone terrorism carried out in the name of "Islam," it would be stylistically awkward for the narrative to reiterate ad nauseam the author's basic stance against terrorism committed by anyone. Nor does the thesis propose a conspiracy theory of Northern mass media against "Islam." It attempts rather to elucidate several of the complex and contradictory processes through which Northern discourses portray Muslim societies. The competition of discourses model helps demonstrate how, despite a tendency among a growing number of Northern opinion leaders to distinguish between the vast diversity of Muslim groups, the dominantly negative discourses on "Islam" tend to subvert these alternative approaches.

Since the relationships between various cultures are of pertinence to this thesis, it would be useful here to outline what will be meant by the terms such as "North," "South," "West," "Muslim societies." Rather than being reflections of absolute geographical, political, economic or cultural realities, these formulations are merely used as analytical tools: they are denotations neither of insulated nor monolithic regions of the planet, but are broad categories that are meant to indicate certain characteristics shared by their people living in them. While
recognizing the multifarious natures of individuals (Bhabha, 1994) and the interconnectedness of various regions of the world (Galtung, 1980: 255-304), such a project as the current one has to delineate some general boundaries between cultural and political actors. The focus of this thesis is the relationship of the technological civilization, which has a "Judeo-Christian" background and is found largely in Europe, North America and Australasia, with long-standing Muslim societies, which are located mainly in lands stretching from Senegal to Mindanao (in the Philippines). Even though there are numerous overlapping features between the Northern and Muslim societies, these regions are viewed as being distinct vis-à-vis each other for purposes of the present analysis.

The "North," which is seen here primarily as a geopolitical, economic and cultural term rather than a geographical one, includes Canada and the US, Western Europe and Eastern Europe, as well as Japan, Australia, New Zealand and Israel. In the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet bloc, it is even more pertinent to speak of the North-South dichotomy than of the "three worlds." While the "South" consists of countries with substantial differences in levels of economic development as well as a variety of distinct cultures, it is legitimate to group them together in the context of the North-South geopolitical divide. They also share the disadvantages of global economic structures which are weighted in favour of the North and the cultural subordination that comes from being former colonies of Northern powers. Although the general framework of this study is the relationship between Northern and Muslim societies, it is pertinent at times to isolate the
"West" as a distinct part of the North which does not include the formerly communist Eastern Europe. Like other regional categories, the "West" is not an all-encompassing term indicating a fixed geographic territory but a historical and cultural locus which has a specific relationship with other parts of the world. Muslim societies will be considered part of "the South," even though there are a number of indigenous and immigrant Muslim communities in the northern hemisphere.

That human perceptions of everyday encounters are the products of social constructions of meanings rather than the results of "objective" observations has been discussed at length by Erving Goffman (1959), Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckman (1967), Clifford Geertz (1973), and others. Dominant meanings of events are developed through the engineering of societal consensus, usually by those who are able to influence dominant discourses. In so far as the bulk of a society subscribes (within a particular historical period) to a set of fundamental myths, one can speak of a dominant discourse that serves as a matrix for its members' discussions on various issues. "Dominant discourse" here does not refer only to a hegemonic linguistic structure, as in Claire Lindgren Lerman's (1983) use of the term, but to the entire hegemonic communicative process. The dominant discourses of a society are not manifestations of a monolithic and static set of ideological and cultural currents: their complexities, which reflect the ever-changing structures of power, are shaped by continually evolving and
potentially contradictory combinations of assumptions, hypotheses and worldviews of socio-economic and intellectual elites.

We must remember that this is not a single, unitary, but a plurality of dominant discourses: that they are not deliberately selected by encoders to 'reproduce events within the horizon of the dominant ideology', but constitute the field of meanings within which they must choose. Precisely because they have become 'universalized and naturalized', they appear to be the only forms of intelligibility available; they have become sedimented as the 'only rational, universally valid ones'... that these premises embody the dominant definitions of the situation, and represent or refract the existing structures of power, wealth and domination, hence that they structure every event they signify, and accent them in a manner which reproduces the given ideological structures - this process has become unconscious, even for the encoders. (Hall, 1979: 343-44)

There is, therefore, not a conspiracy by the mass media to portray certain issues in particular ways, but a process through which they adhere to a common "field of meanings." Nor is it valid to speak of capitalist, liberal or Zionist "control" of the international mass media. It is pertinent, however, to study how certain types of media discourses manage, despite competition from other discourses, to maintain their dominance.

The consensus of hegemonic classes on the major issues of the day at particular junctures in time are mirrored by dominant discourses, which provide the definitions, theoretical paradigms, agendas, and frames with reference to which a society gives meaning to subjects of importance. These reference points form the bases for public discussions and integration propaganda about specific topics such as democracy, science, culture, violence, and peace. Specific (conscious and unconscious) uses of language and visual imagery and the
presentation of information by dominant discourses tend to reinforce the *status quo*. Preferred networks of terminology and preferred meanings of terms prevail in important discussions while alternative terminology and meanings are either disparaged or disregarded. The mass media, which are mainly owned by the socio-economic elite or the state (Kent, 1981; Bagdikian, 1987), are important channels of dissemination of the hegemonic communicative mode and usually function as instruments of consensus-engineering (Ellul, 1969). Dominant discourses continually reproduce themselves in a self-referential manner through the constant interaction between the various communication channels in which they are borne.

While *oppositional discourses* in a society may criticize dominant discourses’ specific viewpoints, they both generally subscribe to the same sets of fundamental myths and premises. *Alternative discourses*, however, provide more serious challenges to the hegemony of dominant discourses, which through their pre-eminent and ubiquitous character manage to overwhelm or subvert messages that do not conform to their particular ideological frameworks. One of the primary features of a dominant discourse is its power to comment upon and interpret major issues and events; it maintains its superiority by being dynamic, continually co-opting and transmuting the words, images and symbols of other discursive modes that threaten its consensus-building efforts (cf. Escobar, 1984-85: 386-387). In this way, it corresponds to the manoeuvring of elites by whom it is produced and whose positions it reinforces. The ability to reframe alternative discourses is at the
heart of a dominant discourse's power to sustain its hegemonic status. The primary means by which it ultimately undergoes transformations are cultural, ideological, political or military revolutions, which in turn give rise to consensus based on new dominant discourses (Kuhn, 1962).

In his study of the construction of the public problem of "drinking-driving," Joseph R. Gusfield identifies three steps by which societal consensus on specific issues is engineered: "naming' the problem, giving it 'public status' by assigning responsibility to do something about it, and legitimating a particular way of viewing the problem" (Robinson and Charron, 1989: 149). As Hugh Dalziel Duncan notes, "Symbolic integration is achieved through naming. We march to death in the name of God" (1968: 21). Dominant discourses play a critical role in the naming of "violence," a phenomenon that has been an integral, albeit enigmatic, feature of human history. Whereas violence is often utilised to repress people, it is also applied to oppose and develop checks against excessive power. George Gerbner, who has carried out extensive studies of violence in television, states:

Violence is a legitimate and necessary cultural expression. It is a dramatic balancing of deadly conflicts against tragic costs. (1992: 97)

Symbolic violence has long been used in rituals to bind communities and stave off real, destructive violence (René Girard, 1977). It is sublimated in a variety of contemporary socio-cultural institutions that have adversarial structures, for example courts of justice where lawyers "fight" cases (harking back to the times
when knights jousting to determine the justness of particular causes, parliamentary
houses of assembly where members of rival political parties debate and hurl ritual
insults at each other, and sports arenas in which opposing teams endeavor to
"beat" each other. Being a primary feature of our myths, violence in symbolic
forms emerges as a functional imperative that structures relationships within
communities and underlies the manners in which societies are organized. Its
public display and narration seem ubiquitous in all cultures since its use is often
intimately related to the constructions of respective moral and socio-political
orders. Physical and psychological violence is used by societies to penalize non­
conformity to its particular rules and laws, through punishments that include fines,
confiscation of property, incarceration and execution. Power is based to a
significant extent on the demonstrated or potential capability for violence:

hierarchies in individual communities and in the "global community" are created
and maintained through its symbolic and actual uses (Geertz, 1973; Kertzer,
1988).

Actual physical violence is endowed with high symbolic value when it is
presented in forms that ideologically support one or another view of political and
social reality. Narratives that dramatize deadly struggles involving heroes, villains
and victims give meaning to the conflicts that exist in human society (Duncan,
1968). Portrayals of particular uses of violence by specific kinds of people
ideologically construct which social role s/he is playing (Gerbner, 1992). Those
who control the production and dissemination of these dramaturges can thus
engender public consensus on which types of people are to be considered as the heroes, the villains and the victims in society. George H. Szanto (1978) has shown how theatre can become a tool of integration propaganda. There have been in recent years, a number of studies that have looked at the ideological construction of news through dramaturgical or ritual approaches (Elliot, 1979; Gusfield, 1981; Chaney, 1983; Robinson and Charron, 1989; Lule, 1989). Analyses of terrorism coverage, such as those of Dowling (1987), Lule (1988), and Payerhin (1990) have also adopted dramaturgical perspectives.

Due to their very nature, incidents of terrorism allow very dramatic renderings. Since dominant discourses will have already established the proper and improper uses of violence, the mass media integration propagandist does not have to expend much ideological labour in constructing scenarios of struggles between the "right" and the "wrong" sides in these violent conflicts and can almost perfunctorily endow specific actors in these incidents the roles of hero, villain and victim. Philip Elliot tells us that in "the human interest accounts of incidents and their aftermath people are portrayed acting out their roles with the appropriate emotions as prescribed by the norms and traditions of their culture" (1979: 161). Mainstream journalists help sustain consensus on the moral order that supports the status quo by portraying state agents as heroes who apply force in the cause of national security, terrorists as villains who use it to destroy life and property, and citizens as victims whose security is threatened by terrorists. Such dramaturgical enactments are among the potent rites through which the legitimacy of the
incumbent structures of power is continually validated: they provide opportunities for the public depiction of "correct" symbolic actions by the agents of the state, their opponents, and the citizenry. Dramatic presentations by the media thus are important ideological means by which consensus is constructed on violence and terrorism.

Dominant discourses support the actions of existing hegemonic powers to preserve themselves from threats that they themselves label violent and terroristic.

British journalist Robert Fisk notes in his book *Pity the Nation: Lebanon at War*,...

... 'terrorism' no longer means terrorism. It is not a definition; it is a political contrivance. 'Terrorists' are those who use violence against the side that is using the word. The only terrorists whom Israel acknowledges are those who oppose Israel. The only terrorists the United States acknowledges are those who oppose the United States or their allies. The only terrorists Palestinians acknowledge - for they too use the word - are those opposed to the Palestinians. (1990: 441)

Since a major concern of this study is the ideological construction of terrorism, a definitive view of the phenomenon is not adopted. However, the following is used as a working definition: "the policy of using acts inspiring terror as a method of ruling or of conducting political opposition." Johan Galtung (1981) provides useful analytical concepts of violence. He offers the notion of "structural violence," manifested in the denial of basic material needs (poverty), human rights (repression) and "higher needs" (alienation) as distinct from direct or "classical" violence (also see Salmi, 1993), thus allowing for the placing of terrorist actions within a larger framework that takes into account historical and socio-economic
conditions from which they arise. Consequences of systematic institutional
behaviour that does not involve direct force but that, nevertheless, leads to
alienation, deprival, disability or death, as under poor working conditions, is also
not usually described as violent or even as forceful in dominant political
discourses. (The psychological stresses of structural violence are often not visible
and are considered non-existent or, at best, of little consequence.) However,
direct, forceful reactions to such structural violence are invariably called violent.
As no immediate violent causes can be uncovered for such (re)actions within
dominant conceptualizations of violence, they are often described as being
irrational. The process of dehistoricization is thus critical for dominant discourses
on violence and terrorism to legitimize or de-legitimize specific forms of violence.

Whereas violence is significant in the operative dynamics of society, it is
also a "social problem" since it continually threatens to disrupt societal order. In a
utopic state, where absolute order is conceived to be the norm, violence would be
an aberration. However, in practice, the state and the socio-economic elite
continually use various kinds of structural and direct violence to exercise and
maintain power, especially against those who would challenge the status quo.
According to Max Weber (1946: 78), the modern state claims monopoly over all
legitimate violence within its borders, and those who carry out violence without
authorization from the state are punished by the state's "bureaucracy of violence
(police, army, jails)" (Kertzer, 1988: 132). In democratic regimes, where public
opinion needs to be assured of the benevolence of the state, the latter has to strive
harder in veiling the force that it itself applies against its own citizens. This violence is presented by its propagandists as being mainly in the interests of maintaining order and security and is portrayed as not being violent. In dominant discourses the term "violence" is generally reserved for the use of force by non-state agents, and the political violence of those who seek to upset the status quo is characterized as "terrorism." "More violent than the violent - such is terrorism," notes Jean Baudrillard (1990: 34). The naming of the problem of terrorism, which arises from the need to veil the violence of the state, is therefore done through highlighting the violence of its enemies.

The second step in constructing consensus is to assign responsibility for the problem. Gusfield identifies three aspects of the structure of public problems: ownership, causal responsibility, and political responsibility.

At any time in a historical period there is a recognition that specific public issues are the legitimate province of specific persons, roles, and offices that can command public attention, trust and influence. They have credibility while others who attempt to capture public attention do not. Owners can make claims and assertions. They are looked at and reported to by others anxious for definitions and solutions to the problem. They possess authority in the field. Even if opposed by other groups, they are among those who can gain the public ear. (1981: 10)

Specific "experts" from government, the military, academia, and the media have emerged as the owners of dominant discourses on terrorism, making themselves readily available to the public through the mass media "to define and describe the problem" (ibid: 13; also see Herman and O'Sullivan, 1991: 39-75). These
integration propagandists participate in developing dominant discourses on terrorism, which they defend from alternative discourses on the issue.

This does not mean that they are engaged in a conscious, coordinated conspiracy to produce a monolithic view, but that they subscribe to a general common purpose and to a common field of meanings. Such "experts" have an important say in the two other aspects of assigning responsibility for the problem of terrorism: who and what causes it and who and what will deal with it. Specific issues involving political violence are generally shorn of their structural causes and are placed under the general rubrics such as "right-wing terrorism," "left-wing terrorism," "narco-terrorism," "nuclear terrorism," or "Islamic terrorism." Lack of security is often pinpointed as a key reason for the occurrence of terrorist incidents and the solution is seen in technological improvements by the state to better detect and prevent terrorism. Persons who are not agents of the state and who use violence for political reasons are portrayed as criminals - they are to be dealt within the legal structures that normally process violent criminals. Public attention is thus kept focused on the violence rather than the politics of political violence.

The last of the Gusfield's three processes by which consent about social problems is engineered is "legitimating a particular way of viewing the problem" (Robinson and Charron, 1989: 149). In making invisible the historical causes of political violence against the state, dominant constructions of terrorism define what are logical, rational, legitimate and civilized behaviours. Once the status quo has been established as a just arrangement for all citizens, there can be no logical
or legitimate reason for rebellion. If the modern state is considered to be the most rational model for organizing political community and represents the cultural and intellectual achievements of (Northern) civilization, then militant opposition to its power structures is "irrational" and "barbaric" (Rosow, 1990). When the structural and direct violence of the state is rendered non-existent, the violence against it can be seen as being "terroristic." Once the massive violence of the colonial era and its continuing effects have been glossed over, the contemporary world order comes to be perceived as a natural consequence of a benign history. Since international structures and the global activities of powerful Northern states are viewed as beneficial for all humankind, the attacks of certain Muslims against the persons and property symbolizing Northern military, political, economic and cultural power can be attributed to the irrationality and barbarism of "Islamic terrorism.

Thus, by influencing how public opinion perceives correct and incorrect modes of political behaviour in modern states and in international relations, dehistoricized dominant discourses help create moral consensus about the nature of political violence.

Dominant myths, which most members of a society have internalized, make certain interpretations of phenomena appear "natural" and "rational" (Habermas, 1970: 81-122). According to Jacques Ellul (1969), technological society adheres to what he identifies as the two primary myths of Science and History, and the secondary ones of the Nation, Work, Youth, Happiness, and the Hero. When interpreted through the myth of Science, the secondary myths suggest
that the currently existing circumstances have the potential for perfection: this therefore tends to promote acquiescence to the *status quo* and socio-political complacency (Szanto, 1978: 40). The myth of History instead promotes a continual reassessment of the human condition. For these reasons integration propagandists favour the myth of Science over that of History.

The myth of the Nation is used as a major analytical frame in this study since it marks out the socio-political outlines for the other secondary myths to operate in. Its extension into the international system of states has allowed dominant Eurocentric discourses to impose themselves ideologically onto the entire planet (Worsley, 1984; Amin, 1989). Eurocentric models of progress, development and democracy, based on the primary myth of Science, have become the ideals which most peoples aspire to:

Eurocentrism is, like all dominant social phenomena, easy to grasp in the multiplicity of its daily manifestations but difficult to define precisely. Its manifestations, like those of other prevailing social phenomena, are expressed in the most varied of areas: day-to-day relationships between individuals, political information and opinion, general views concerning society and culture, social science. These expressions are sometimes violent, leading all the way to racism, and sometimes subtle. They express themselves in the idiom of popular opinion as well as in the erudite languages of specialists in politics, the Third World, economics, history, theology, and all the formulations of social science. (Amin, 1989: 106)

The myth of the Nation, which is integral to Northern technological culture, has through the universalization of the scientific interpretation based on technological myths become hegemonic over the entire planet.
Adherence to global structures such as those of trade, which operate in favour of the North, are also promoted by the dominant international discourses. Punishment meted out by hegemonic powers for non-compliance spans the range from refusal to grant markets for products and economic sanctions to outright bombing and invasion of territory. The violent world order also includes the support of powerful states for regimes of "National Security States" (NSS), that oppress their populations to keep an uninterrupted supply of raw materials flowing to Northern multi-national companies, and the arming of regional powers to destabilize neighbouring countries - this is the "real terrorist network" in the alternative discourse of Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman. They have described how the "Free Press" has in various periods of time overlooked US involvement in supplying and training the armies of repressive regimes such as those in Guatemala, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, El Salvador, South Vietnam, South Korea, Burma, the Philippines, Indonesia, Turkey, Pakistan, Iran, and Israel, all of which carried out massive violence against subject populations over the last few decades. Chomsky and Herman gave the example of the coverage of the relationship in the 1960s and 1970s between Washington and the government of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlevi of Iran, a major supplier of petroleum for the US.

The Iranian secret police has received generous training and support from the United States, which has deluged its Iranian client with arms, "priming" it, as a Senate report noted, to serve as the gendarme for U.S. interests throughout the Middle East. When the Iranian people rose in an astonishing and completely unexpected demonstration of mass popular opposition to the terror and corruption of the Shah, the Free Press obediently described this
bloody tyrant as a great "liberalizer" who was attempting to bring to his backward country the benefits of modernization, opposed by religious fanatics and left-wing students. *Newsweek* described the demonstrators as "an unlikely coalition of Muslim fundamentalists and leftist activists" (22 May 1978) while *Time* added that "the Shah also has a broad base of popular support" (5 June 1978) ... There is barely a mention in the media of the facts on the magnitude of corruption, the scale of police terror and torture, the significance of the fantastic expenditures for arms - the police and military establishments are probably the only elements of Iranian society that could be described as fully "modernized" - and the devastating effects on the majority of the population of the agricultural reforms and urban priorities. (Chomsky and Herman, 1979: 14)

The phenomenal scale of state terror perpetrated by the Shah's regime had been so completely downplayed in dominant discourses that even US intelligence agencies appeared to have been taken by surprise when he was overthrown in 1979.

Dominant discourses on terrorism avert their eyes from the massive structural and direct violence perpetrated by hegemonic states and their clients, and focus instead on the political violence of non-compliant states and groups. Mainstream journalists generally frame their accounts of the latter's actions within the dominant interpretations of technological myths, demonizing them as "terrorist states" and "international terrorists," while largely disregarding the global terrorism of Northern powers conducted directly or through client states. Interpretations of the actions of actors are arrived at by viewing them through the dominant system of meanings. If the culture of particular groups, that is, their system of meanings (Geertz, 1973), is divergent from the hegemonic one, then they are named as being deviant. Dominant discourses on terrorism are therefore
the ideological/cultural constructions of hegemonic elites. Those elements who express their opposition to the value systems of the latter through violence are described as "terrorists." And as the result of some Muslims who purport to use violence against both local and global elites in the name of "Islam," we have the dominant discourses' construction of "Islamic terrorism."

The mass media play a key role in engineering consensus about important societal issues. Owned either by the state or economic elites (Kent, 1981; Bagdikian, 1987), they regularly present perspectives that help maintain the status quo (Chomsky, 1986; Hall, 1980; Gans, 1980). The mass media are indeed a "marketplace of ideas," but the information that supports the dominant ideas in society are usually placed in the most prominent showcases of the media bazaars. Hegemonic discourses normally appear on the front and editorial pages and at the beginning of news programs, while alternative discourses that contradict the structures of societal power are relegated (in the rare instances when they do appear) to the more obscure parts of newspapers and electronic broadcasts. By placing events into ideologically preferred frames (Goffman, 1974), journalists continually provide the "factual" evidence that buttresses the dominant discourses of society. Acting as "integration propagandists" the mainstream media primarily couch "reality" within the myths of technological civilization, according to which modern states are organized (Ellul, 1969; Szanto, 1978; Tuchman, 1981).

Alternative discourses that attempt to offer different worldviews, such as those provided by terrorists, are generally recoded within the frameworks of dominant
discourses. However, it bears restating that the preferred encoding of events and issues by the mass media is not viewed here as a centrally-orchestrated or a precisely-directed procedure but one that operates within a hegemonic structure of meaning creation (Hall, 1979: 343-44).

Northern mainstream journalists have available to them specific fields of meanings that they use in constructing discourses on the respective places in global society of the North, of Muslims, of terrorists etc. The meanings that the terrorists who profess "Islam" attempt symbolically to endow their violence with are doubly veiled by the ideological and cultural gulfs that separate them from the Northern mainstream journalists. With the decline of the Western image of the Soviet enemy, the Muslim appears to have (re)assumed the cultural role of a primary Other (see Huntington, 1993), which s/he had played in Northern discourses for a millennium preceding the Cold War.

In the battle to create globally dominant meanings, the Northern mass media are much more powerful than Muslim sources. Apart from lacking comparable hardware to compete with Northern media networks, the global media infrastructures militate against information that runs counter to the mainly North-South flows (Mowlana, 1986: 25-27). Even though individual Muslims have made inroads into mainstream media institutions in some Northern countries, they collectively lack access to dominant discourses. As Akbar Ahmed notes,

Muslims in the media have no voice, no platform, so they cannot object or explain. Muslim expressions of cultural identity are dismissed as fanaticism, Muslim demands for legitimate rights
[are] seen as fundamentalism. In this media game Muslims - weak and impotent, it appears - cannot win. Their frustration thus finds expression in anger and in violence. (1992: 256)

Northern integration propagandists, exploiting traditional stereotypes of the "bloodthirsty Saracen" have been able to engineer consensus about an essentially deviant "Islam" in their own societies as well as in others. This is due to their success in naming the problem, in assigning responsibility for it and identifying the correct means to deal with it, and in "legitimating a particular way of viewing the problem" (Robinson and Charron, 1989: 149). This thesis will attempt to show how these processes are accomplished. It will then consider possibilities for a dialectical, inter-cultural approach towards international communication that may help create greater understanding of political and cultural realities in the Muslim societies and of its relations with the North.

"Islam" as the contemporary Other

There appears to have been in dominant Northern discourses of the last decade and a half a consistent theme that has portrayed "Islam" as a source of peril. While there remain other forces opposed to the hegemony of Northern elites, such as the various popularly-based movements in the industrialized and non-industrialized societies, "Islam," with its world-wide body of adherents, appears to present a major ideological challenge. This propagandic theme capitalizes on traditional Northern images of Muslims as violent and irrational barbarians intent on destroying Christian civilization. Following the collapse of the Soviet threat,
the notion of "Islam" as a primary Other has grown. As Northern military industrial complexes face the loss of their supposed raison d'être, some Northern propagandists appear to be engaged in strengthening the image of Muslims as representing a fundamental threat to Western civilization (Pipes, 1990). A monolithic "Islam" is presented as the antithesis of Western liberal values developed over the last 300 years. However, since Northern powers have frequently sought allies in Muslim states, the conflict with "Islam" cannot be presented as a clear-cut struggle such as that between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. (There are also other distinct opponents to the hegemony of the Northern elite classes such as the environmentalist movement, the women's movement, as well as "narco-terrorism.") Nevertheless, as in the Gulf War (1990-91), during which several Muslim states sided with Northern ones, the Iraqi enemy could still be demonized by Northern propagandists by accentuating its "Islamic" characteristics. With the approaching advent of the third Christian millennium and the rise in belief in prophecies about the Apocalypse, "Islam" has emerged in several narratives as embodying the Antichrist.  

Several Muslim groups have attempted to respond to the long-standing hegemonic status of the North that has existed since the colonial era and has come to be part of the "natural" scheme of things in dominant international discourses. However, most resistance to technological ideologies is frequently portrayed by Northern propagandists as being irrational and unwarranted, and as stemming from the regressive nature of "Islam." The broad range of alternative discourses of
some Muslim groups to counter the present dominance of the North over Muslim cultures is often lumped together as "Islamic terrorism." Since the international mass media are based primarily in North America and Europe, the political and cultural reference points for dominant discourses about international relations tend mainly to be anchored in the North (Hamelink, 1985). This tendency was well-illustrated during the Cold War in the almost mandatory journalistic framing of Southern states as pro-US or pro-Soviet: the significance of events in these countries were then judged according to their geopolitical placement in relation to the North. In the contemporary era of the single military superpower, the reference points are generally "pro-" or "anti-US".

A critical factor in the shaping of many domestic and external policies adopted by Southern countries is the North's overwhelming cultural, ideological, economic, and military influence. The countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America share in Northern technological myths in so far as they subscribe to the discourses of development (Escobar, 1984-85; DuBois, 1991) sponsored by the North. Incorporated into the global system of nation-states engendered by Europe, most Muslim countries are led by elites who structure their states in accordance with the technological myth of the Nation. Dominant discourses on violence and terrorism are constructed within the political framework of the nation-state system and the power relationships that exist within it. At the domestic level, violent opponents of the state are generally termed "terrorists," and at the inter-state level
violent opponents of hegemonic global order become "international terrorists" and "terrorist states."

Several countries with dominantly Muslim populations (Libya, Syria, Iraq, Iran and South Yemen) have at various times been declared "terrorist states" by the US State Department. Due to the exclusive communications links between Western metropolitan centres and specific developing countries (MacBride, 1980; Smith, 1980) the optic through which the Northern mass media view particular countries in the South often determines the manners in which even the neighbours of these countries perceive them. Through this process of international consensus creation those that are declared "terrorist states" by the West, particularly the United States, tend to become pariahs in the eyes of the most other countries, and the members of those non-governmental organizations that espouse violence against the hegemonic global order become "international terrorists" to be shunned by all. For example, the portrayal of Iraq in the international mass media since the late 1970s seems to have been heavily influenced by the changes in its relationship with the United States. Iraq was dropped in 1982 from the list of "terrorist states" by the US State Department when the former was at war with Iran; Washington supported the government of Saddam Hussein during that conflict even though it continued to sponsor terrorist groups (Emerson, 1991). Once the Iran-Iraq War was over and Iraq threatened, with its invasion of Kuwait in 1990, to emerge as a regional power independent of American control, the United States descended on it with apocalyptic fury during the Gulf War. Integration propagandists in the
international mass media, who had hitherto not been prone to condemn the heinous human rights abuses of Saddam Hussein's government, seemed suddenly to discover the long-standing brutality of his regime (Chomsky, 1992: 55, 152). One of the most effective ways to discredit Hussein seemed to be to portray his actions within the dominant frames of "terrorism" and "Islam" (Bailie and Frank, 1992).

A study of the construction of "Islamic terrorism" in the dominant international discourse leads one to explore the networks of dominant Northern discourses on "Islam," "violence," and "terrorism." Edward Said (1981) has attempted to show how Northern mass media have supported a particular perspective on "Islam" that has more to do with the power relationships between Northern and Muslim states than with real attempts to understand the religion and cultures of some one billion people who make up one-fifth of humanity. According to him, the resurgence of strong religious feelings among Muslims in various parts of the world has led to a form of reporting by the international media that serves more to mystify than to explain events occurring in Muslim societies.

It has given consumers of news the sense that they have understood Islam without at the same time intimating to them that a great deal in this energetic coverage is based on far from objective material. In many instances, "Islam" has licensed not only patent inaccuracy but also expressions of unrestrained ethnocentrism, cultural and even racial hatred, deep yet paradoxically free-floating hostility. All this has taken place as part of what is presumed to be fair, balanced, responsible coverage of Islam. Aside from the fact that neither Christianity nor Judaism, both of them going through quite remarkable revivals (or "returns"), is treated in so emotional a way, there is an unquestioned assumption that Islam can be
characterized limitlessly by means of a handful of recklessly general and repeatedly deployed clichés. And always it is supposed that the "Islam" being talked about is some real and stable object out there where "our" oil supplies happen to be found. (1981: ix)

The particular international "problem" of the challenge that some Muslims present to the Northern-dominated global order is thus named "Islam," a term that comes to be manipulated according to the needs of the particular source discussing it. Whereas a number of Northern journalists and other opinion leaders have taken pains to state that "Islam" is not synonymous with violence or terrorism; however, their alternative discourses are usually overwhelmed by many other sources that continue to frame information within dominant discourses.

The tendency of attributing various social and political phenomena to "Islam," however, is not exclusive to Northern discourses but is to be found in the Muslim milieu as well. The core of dominant Muslim discourses on "Islam," established during the three centuries after the death of the prophet Muhammad in 632, has come historically to be used by hegemonic groups within Muslim societies to maintain their respective dominance (Syed, 1987). Over time, this discourse has become part of the "orthodox" understanding of Muslim creed and history and is broadly subscribed to not only by the political and religious elites but even militants who oppose the hegemony of these sections of society (Arkoun, 1987). While the positions of the Muslim militants (Islamists) do form oppositional Muslim discourses, they do not seem to provide viable answers for the contingencies of the technological society. More profound and practical
Muslim proposals for countering Eurocentric influences have come from the alternative writings of such scholars as Muhammad Iqbal (1934), Ali Shariati (1979), Fazlur Rahman (1982), Akbar Ahmed (1992), Fatima Mernissi (1992), and Mohammed Arkoun (1994), deriving from their familiarity with Islamic as well as Western thought. Their respective proposals about approaches that contemporary Muslims can adopt to respond to technological society will be explored to provide a glimpse into the range of proposals for Muslim responses to present-day Northern influence.

Dominant Muslim discourses often attempt to legitimize actions of certain groups of Muslims with references to "Islamic history," "Islamic peoples," "Islamic socialism," "Islamic government," "Islamic revolution" etc. In the absence of a singular authoritative "Church," each Muslim group, in so far as it adheres to a particular school of law (madhhab), can claim that its actions follow scriptural dictates. However, consensus does not exist on the legitimacy of the using terrorist techniques even among the militant Muslim groups. Nevertheless, the Northern-based international media tend uncritically to accept the "Islamicness" of these actions without putting them into the context of the rigorous debates among Muslims on such issues. (They are usually more circumspect when relating the "Christianness" of extremist groups such as White supremacists who use Christian symbols and offer religious rationalizations for their actions.)
Due to the many cases of disagreements about what is truly "Islamic," it is necessary to distinguish between two dimensions in which the religion manifests itself. Edward Said notes, "the word Muslim is less provocative and more habitual for most Arabs; the word Islamic has acquired an activist, even aggressive quality that belies the more ambiguous reality" (1993: 64). The adjective "Islamic" will be reserved in this study for the "metaphysical, religious, spiritual" dimension of the faith (Arkoun, 1980: 51), limiting it to the fundamental aspects of Muhammad's message, as it appears in the primary scriptural sources (the Koran and the hadith - the Prophet's traditions). "Muslim" will be used, in a qualified sense, for "the second level of signification, (which) is the sociohistorical space in which human existence unfolds" (ibid). This will help to distinguish between the theological ideals and the reality that Muslims, encounter in abiding by these ideals: whereas "Islam" may be viewed as a "way of life," all that Muslims do (despite claims to the contrary) is not necessarily "Islamic." In this sense, there are histories of respective Muslim peoples, governments of various Muslim peoples, and socialism(s) practised by Muslim peoples living in specific countries, rather than "Islamic history," "Islamic peoples," "Islamic governments," or "Islamic socialism."

Therefore, the acts of terrorism by individuals, groups or governments professing "Islam" are seen here as belonging to "the sociohistorical space in which human existence unfolds." These actions are willy-nilly part of the history of certain Muslims who carry them out and by extension of the histories of their
specific (regional, national) communities and even the global Muslim community, in so far as significant acts carried out by members of these communities are part of their respective histories. Bombings and hijackings carried out by the "Islamic Jihad" in Lebanon in the 1990s cannot be considered "Islamic" or "Muslim terrorism" but as terrorist acts committed by a group which exists in a particular historical period and claims to act in the name of "Islam." The distinction of the two dimensions in this study helps to identify the ideological use of "Islamic" terminology in Northern and Muslim discourses. "Islamism" and "Islamist" (Al-Azmeh, 1993: 60-88) rather than "fundamentalism" and "fundamentalist" (terms whose etymological roots lie in Christian contexts) will be used to refer to those militant Muslims who dogmatically insist on imposing their worldviews on others.

Canadian Media Coverage of Muslim Countries

While foreign affairs coverage in Canadian newspapers is relatively low, the percentage of the newshole devoted to reporting the Middle East (with which "Islam" is most readily identified) appears to vary widely. Gertrude J. Robinson's (1983) content analysis conducted in 1977 showed Middle Eastern coverage to be an average of 4.5% of total foreign news coverage in 10 English language dailies and 6.7% of seven French papers; the 1981 Royal Commission on Newspapers found it to be as high as 41% (Kent, 1981); and John R. Walker's (1989) study of five newspapers saw it running at 8.7% in 1966, 20.3% in 1976 and 19.3% in 1986. The wide variation is most likely a factor of the specific events occurring
during the particular periods of study as well as different methodologies adopted by respective authors. However, given the small proportion of Canadian press' newshole devoted to non-North American news it is clear that the "news threshold" (Galtung and Ruge, 1965: 68) which events in the Muslim societies have to pass is relatively high.

The Canadian mass media are largely integrated into the hegemonic communications global network of the technological West (Hannigan, 1991). Canadian newspapers are heavily dependent on foreign, especially American, wire services for international news. United Press International and Associated Press as well as the newspaper-based services such as the New York Times news service, Knight-Ridder, Cox News, and Scripps Howard have provided the bulk of the daily material. As a consequence, the coverage of international news in Canada is significantly influenced by the manners in which American journalists perceive it - this factor becomes crucial when considering regions of the world such as the Middle East in which the United States government has strong interests. While Ann L. Hibbard and T.A. Keenleyside (1995) concluded in their study that the Canadian press resisted an American view of foreign news, other work (Maybee, 1980; Surlin and Cuthbert, 1986; MacPherson, 1992; Soderland 1985, 1990; Soderlund, Walter C., Robert M. Krause and Richard G. Price, 1991; Soderland, Walter C., Ronald H. Wagenberg and Ian C. Pemberton, 1994) has indicated otherwise. According to the latter research, Canadian newspapers tend to be
heavily dependent on American news services for international content. Soderland notes about the press coverage of Salvadoran elections in 1982 and 1984,

While the elections received twice as much coverage in the American press as they did in the Canadian press, with the exception of some differences in leader evaluation and emphasis on issues, Canadians received essentially the same media portrayal of the elections as did Americans. (1990: 61)

A study by Jack Maybee of Canadian international coverage showed that The Globe and Mail and The Toronto Star were largely dependent on American news services, and missed opportunities on reporting on the Canadian angle of the Iranian revolution in 1979 (1980: 8-9; also see MacPherson, 1992). One of the issues that this study will explore is the way that American news sources affect coverage of Muslim societies in Canadian newspapers such as The Globe and Mail, The Toronto Star, The Ottawa Citizen and The Montreal Gazette.

But more than the reliance for foreign news on non-Canadian sources, the cultural relationships between the mass media of Canada and other Western countries, especially the United States, are of special significance to this dissertation. The Canadian mass media share with the mass media of other Northern countries the primary myths of modern technological society, which provide the primary fields of meanings for the interpretation of events taking place in the world. These myths are used in an integrative way to create consensus in technological societies about critical matters such as the right of holding power by certain individuals or groups, the illegitimacy of certain kinds of opposition to the nation-state, and the legitimacy of certain uses of violence by the state. They also
help engineer agreement about implicit hierarchies among nations, the relationships between them, and the place of non-governmental organizations in the world of nation-states. This forms what David Lloyd refers to "a global narrative which allows for only one version of human history, [and] the gradual incorporation of all nations by a Western notion of development or modernity" (Corcoran, 1992: 117).

The Canadian mass media also share a basically common cultural view of "Islam" with their American counterparts and participate in dominant Northern discourses about Muslim societies (Gualtieri, 1985). A significant part of the Canadian mass media's coverage of Muslim societies involves an interpretation of Muslim responses to the North's cultural, ideological, economic, and military influence over that part of the globe. Such responses are necessarily framed within dominant Canadian perspectives of Muslims, which are informed by the cultural history of the North and by the geopolitical location of Canada in the world. Dominant discourses on "Islam" and "Islamic terrorism" are developed in the Canadian mass media in these ways and become the framework within which the violent as well as non-violent opposition by some Muslims to the global hegemony of the North is publicly discussed.

In analysing the coverage of Muslim societies by the Northern-dominated international mass media one cannot disregard the long history of inter-cultural relations between Middle Easterners and Europeans. The images that have developed of each other over millennia necessarily colour current perceptions.
For most of the Middle Ages and during the early part of the Renaissance in Europe, Islam was believed to be a demonic religion of apostasy, blasphemy, and obscurity. It did not seem to matter that Muslims considered Mohammed a prophet and not a god; what mattered to Christians was that Mohammed was a false prophet, a sower of discord, a sensualist, a hypocrite, an agent of the devil. Nor was this view of Mohammed strictly a doctrinal one. Real events in the real world made of Islam a considerable political force. For hundreds of years Islamic armies and navies threatened Europe, destroyed its outposts, colonized its domains. It was as if a younger, more virile and energetic version of Christianity had arisen in the East, equipped itself with the learning of the ancient Greeks, invigorated itself with a simple, fearless, and warlike creed, and set about destroying Christianity. Even when the world of Islam entered a period of decline and Europe a period of ascendency, fear of "Mohammedanism" persisted. Closer to Europe than any of the other non-Christian religions, the Islamic world by its very adjacency evoked memories of its encroachments on Europe, and always of its latent power to disturb the West. (Said, 1981: 4-5)

The image of "Islam" as a disruptive and regressive element in the contemporary world order is very strong in the coverage of Muslims by the Northern mass media. Reportage of various Middle Eastern wars, the "OPEC crisis" of the mid-1970s, the civil wars in Lebanon and Sudan, the Iranian hostage crisis in 1979-1980, the "Rushdie Affair" in 1989, the 1990-91 Gulf War, the intermittent conflicts in Azerbaijan, Chechnya, Kashmir, Mindanao in the Philippines, and East Timor, as well as of the terrorist acts aimed at Northern targets often tends to attribute blame explicitly or implicitly to "Islam," regardless of these separate events' specific historical, cultural, social, economic and political factors. This may be due to what Johan Galtung and Mari Ruge have termed as their "consonance hypothesis" about the structure of foreign news: "The more
consonant the signal is with the mental image of what one expects to find, the more probable that it will be recorded as worth listening to" (1965: 67). Since the age-old cognitive models (van Dijk, 1988: 20-28) of "Islam," imbedded over the centuries in European lore, are of discord (Daniel, 1960), the credibility of current media accounts about Muslims as being inherently disruptive do not tend to be contested. Even though contemporary Northern discourses are secular, the memory of a Christendom in millennial conflict with Muslim societies frequently appears in present-day narratives. This tendency seems to have intensified in the post-Cold War era when the Muslim is once again becoming a primary Other.

A theme of "Islam versus the West" underlies a significant proportion of the Northern coverage of Muslim societies. The phenomenon of "Islamic terrorism" fits so well into the mould of the medieval image of Muslims as being the violent and bloodthirsty Other that even when hijackers and bombers are actually Christian Arabs, they are often portrayed as being Muslim. It appears that most conflicts in Muslim societies are mandatorily framed by the international mass media as being of a religious nature at the expense of exploring their social, cultural, economic or historical causes: for example, the reporting of the conflict between Azeris and Armenians has been described as being between Muslims and Christians when the actual issues were primarily territorial (Chorbajian, 1990). The perspective of religious strife sees Muslims as still engaged in "holy war" with Christians and threatening to take over Europe as well as North America. However, this frame appears to be applied selectively, and usually in cases where
the Muslim group is viewed as the oppressor. The Muslim identity of victimized
groups is often not indicated: during the coverage of a massacre of Azeris by
Armenians in March 1992 references to religious affiliation virtually disappeared,
and when news reports by the Western correspondents covering the Soviet
republic of Georgia in March 1991 reported on the repression of the Ossetian
minority by the ethnic Georgian majority - even the longer feature articles
generally failed to indicate that the Ossetians are largely Muslims and Georgians
mainly Christians. It appears thus, that the dramaturgy of the Muslim-Christian
conflict model appears to become operative generally when the Muslim is the
villain and the Christian the victim.

Conversely, a variant mode of portrayal emerges when Jewish Israelis are
present in the narrative. Prior to the peace agreement between Israel and the PLO,
the existence of Palestinian Christians was hardly ever mentioned in international
coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian struggle. It seems that the dominant image of
Jewish Israelis as victims/heroes, which was key to garnering Western support for
Israel, would have been compromised if they were portrayed in confrontational
situations with native Christians in the Holy Land (Dossa, 1988). More recently,
Christian Palestinians have become more visible in dominant discourses, but they
are portrayed primarily as victims of Muslim Palestinians. Such manipulation of
identities of actors in news reports will be explored to provide illustrations for the
ideological constructions of "Islam."
Alternative Northern discourses on "Islam" expressed by John L. Esposito (1993), Graham E. Fuller and Ian O. Lesser (1995), Jochen Hippler and Andrea Lueg (1995), and Fred Halliday (1996) as well as by some journalists and political leaders have attempted to demonstrate that the portrayals of the "Islamic threat" to the North is largely overblown. They do point out, however, that the primary danger is for Muslim societies which have been destabilized by militant Islamism. Nevertheless, these voices are drowned out by the constant din of the dominant discourses that capitalize on the vast store of negative images of Muslims to present the "Islamic peril" as a primary obstacle to global peace. The perusal of the Canadian print media coverage of the Gulf War in this dissertation will provide the opportunity to study how dominant Canadian discourses fit into global media narratives of the post-Cold War era.
Structure and Methodology

Since this study deals with a number of complex subjects (the dominant discourses of societies, ideological constructions by the mass media, the communication hegemony of the North over the South, cultural responses of Muslims to this hegemony, and the portrayal of "Islam" as a post-cold War Other), I have opted for a step-by-step rather than a strictly chronological approach dealing with the various issues. The body of the dissertation is divided into twelve chapters. The initial two chapters discuss some of the ways in which violence and terrorism are constructed by the mass media, which operate within the basic myths of the technological society. This is followed by a scrutiny of Muslim discourses on the Northern technological civilization and on violence. The fifth and sixth chapters look at the roots of Northern perceptions of "Islam" and their contemporary expressions. Then, I proceed to study coverage of "Islamic terrorism" by Northern mass media. The seventh and eight chapters analyze the dramaturgical depiction of conflicts between people who happen to be of different religious backgrounds. In the last chapter, I examine the construction of "Islam" as a post-Cold War Other. The conclusion considers various proposals for enhancing international, inter-cultural communication between Northern and Muslim societies. The approach adopted in this thesis seeks to make a contribution to communication studies by tracing cultural constructions of political violence in an international, inter-cultural context by the mass media of a country that is not a primary actor in the conflict.
The titles of the various parts of the dissertation are:

Introduction

Chapter 1: Technological Myths and Violence

Chapter 2: Journalistic Constructions of Terrorism

Chapter 3: Muslim Responses to Technological Myths

Chapter 4: Debates about *Jihad*

Chapter 5: Orientalist Imaginaries

Chapter 6: Violence and Lust

Chapter 7: Assassins, Terrorists and Hostages

Chapter 8: Covering a Hijacking

Chapter 9: Religious Strife as Journalistic Script

Chapter 10: Reporting from the Holy Land

Chapter 11: Containing “Islam”

Chapter 12: A Global Media Narrative

Conclusion.

The copies of news clippings, pictures and editorial cartons in some chapters are meant to provide illustrations for various textual themes. References to newspaper and magazine materials that are analyzed appear either in the text or in endnotes but not in the bibliography, which would otherwise have become extremely unwieldy.

This thesis will use ritual (Chaney, 1985), dramatic (Burke, 1968; Duncan, 1962), and critical discourse (van Dijk, 1988, 1991, 1993)
methodologies. Rather than carrying out a "hunt for a fleeting reference in a
forgotten paragraph" this study will search for "obvious patterns among symbols
and themes" (Lule, 1988: 6) in the various media samples. It will apply David
Chaney's three-pronged framework for ritual analysis which allows for the
scrutiny of the mass media as reporters of society's rituals, journalists' ritualistic
modes of reporting, and the media's own collective ritualistic nature (1985: 4). In
conjunction with this approach, the dissertation will also carry out dramatistic
analyses of textual and graphic materials; although inspired by the work of
Kenneth Burke and Hugh Dalziel Duncan, it will not engage their specific
methods, but focus on the ways in which heroes, villains and victims are created
and ideologically manipulated. The discourse analyses will be carried out by
studying cognitive macrostructures like scripts and models elucidated by Tuen van
Dijk, but not his microlevel modes of perusing the linguistic properties of
discursive structures.

The corpus that is to be analyzed is drawn from publications produced
largely in Canada (mostly Ontario and Quebec) from the 1980s to the mid-1990s,
and some American and British materials from the same period. Three qualitative
case studies comprehensively scrutinize coherent samples: Chapter 8 looks at the
coverage of a hijacking in Maclean's, Time, Newsweek, The Middle East and
Arabia magazines issued from the last week of June 1985 to the middle of July
1985; Chapter 9 peruses the reportage of the Armenian-Azeri conflict in morning
editions of The Montreal Gazette, The Globe and Mail, The Toronto Star and The

Notes

1. To say that perceptions of violence are culturally constructed is not to deny the real effects of violent acts, but to indicate that information sources tend to highlight certain kinds of violence and de-emphasize, even conceal, others.

2. "We can no longer use the word "Islam" without quotation marks. It has been so misused and distorted by the media, Muslims themselves, and political scientists that we need a radical reworking of the concept" (Arkoun, 1991: 50). For a concise discussion of the religious, cultural and historical manifestations of "Islam" in its diversity, see Hodgson (1974: vol 1, 71-99).

3. For an extensive listing of sources on Western images of Muslims see Karim (1991).

4. Hamid Mowlana proposes consideration of "the source, the process of production, the process of distribution, and the process of utilization" for comprehensive studies of the international flow of information (1986: 203).

5. The terms "Muslim world" or "Islamic world" will be avoided in order not to reinforce the impression of a monolithic global Muslim community. Aziz Al-Azmeh writes in Islams and Modernities that "there are as many Islams as there are situations that support it" (1993: 1). For the purposes of this study, Turkey is considered a Muslim society and not a part of the technological North.


8. Jacques Ellul offers the following definition of political myths: "By 'myth' we mean an all-encompassing, activating image; a sort of vision of desirable objectives that have lost their material, practical character and have become strongly colored, overwhelming, all-encompassing, and which displace from the conscious all that is not related to it. Such an image pushes man to action precisely because it includes all that he feels is good, just, and true" (1969: 31).

9. Raymond Williams has the following to say about the notion of "hegemony," which has been derived from the work of Antonio Gramsci: "... it is not limited to matters of direct political control but seeks to describe a more general predominance which includes, as one of its key features, a particular way of seeing the world and human nature and relationships. It is different in this sense from the notion of 'world-view', in that the ways of seeing the world and ourselves and others are not just intellectual but political facts, expressed over a range from institutions to relationships and consciousness ... Thus an emphasis on hegemony and the hegemonic has come to include cultural as
well as political and economic factors ..." (1983: 145).

10. Ideology is viewed in this study as "the general process of the production of meanings and ideas." (Williams, 1977: 55). According to E. Vern, ideology is "a level of signification which can be present in any type of message, even in the scientific discourse. Any material of social communication is susceptible to an ideological reading" (1971: 16). Richard Gregg says that myth/ideology "sanctions particular principles of order by placing them under the aegis of a piously charged design. It encompasses inconsistencies and contradictions of motive through obscurantism of motive and mystification. It sanctions purgative symbolic strategies of projection, transformation, and reduction. It impregnates social convention with normative and moral imperatives. It offers multiple possibilities for personal identification through presenting meaning structures flexible enough to encourage reinterpretation in response to vicissitudes of time and fortune. Above all, it provides an ultimate synthesis of experience, an all-encompassing boundary for the structuring of vagrant meaning. It prescribes the border that separates those who are centrally engaged in the "right way" of existence from those who are not." (1984: 123)

11. Culture is seen here as a system of meaning creation: "There is, on the one hand, life, existence, and behaviour and, on the other hand, attempts to find the meaning and significance in this experience and behaviour. Culture according to this reading is the meaning and significance particular people discover in their experience through art, religion, and so forth. To study culture is to seek order within these forms, to bring out in starker relief their claims and meanings, and to state systematically the relations between the multiple forms directed to the same end: to render experience comprehensible and charged with affect. But what is called the study of culture can also be called the study of communications, for what we are studying in this context are the ways in which experience is worked into understanding and then disseminated and celebrated ..." (Carey, 1989: 44).

12. Erving Goffman views a frame as being the "principles of organization which govern events - at least social ones - and our subjective involvement in them" (1974: 10-11). In looking at the development of news frames, Gaye Tuchman explains "how frames transform occurrences and happenings (strips of the everyday world) into defined events" (1978: 7). Journalists (and human beings at large) impose frames on "strips" - which Erving Goffman refers to as "slice[s] from the stream of ongoing activity" (1974: 10) - to give meaning to particular occurrences. These news frames, usually based on journalists' individual or institutional views, ideologically colour the reading of events, thus serving to limit their interpretations for audiences. The relationship of shorter-term cognitive macrostructures such as frames, scripts, and models to longer-term ones such as archetypal myths and topos are discussed in Chapter 5.

13. Jacques Ellul (1969: 75) makes clear that institutional sources give out only that information which will promote their particular interests: all messages are propagandic as they are always slanted, however slightly, in favour of the vested interests that impart them. Hence, no information is purely objective. Ellul makes a distinction between the uses of "agitation propaganda" and "integration propaganda": while the overt, aggressive promotion of a cause is the popularly understood meaning of propaganda, he points out that integration propaganda is a more subtle yet ubiquitous discursive form that makes the members of a society conform to a discourse and a hierarchy that is already in place.

14. The use of the terms "alternative" and "opposite" here is contrary to that of Raymond Williams (1977: 113). This dissertation seeks to present alternative discourses as those that do not subscribe to the same views as dominant ones, and oppositional discourses as operating within the broad philosophical frameworks of the societies in which the dominant discourses exercise their hegemony. See Mendlovitz et al (1990), Herman and O'Sullivan (1991: 39), and Karim (1993a, 1993b).
15. These are not viewed only as comprising those wielding economic power, but also those who have the ability to shape public opinion through their access to symbolic resources. They include journalists, academics, "experts" as well as clergy (Porter, 1965: 457-519; also see Mills, 1956).


19. In their propaganda model describing how the mass media process information, Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky list the steps by which "money and power are able to filter out the news fit to print, marginalize dissent, and allow the government and dominant private interests to get their messages across to the public" (1988: 2).

20. Robinson and Charron (1989: 156) discuss "how 'factual reporting' conventions used by journalists mimic scientific rationality to invest their rhetoric with greater power and believability."


22. Some Lebanese Shia groups are routinely described as being "pro-Iran."

23. Even though much criticism has been levelled at the "dependency theorists" of international relations, Northern hegemony over the globe remains an indisputable fact. Cf. Kohli (1986). Also see Bin Sayyed (1995).


26. Also see Arkoun (1994: 15-17) and Al-Azmeh (1993: 60-61).

27. For two different perspectives on the inaccuracy of this term in Muslim contexts see Fazlur Rahman (1982: 142) and Abdur-Rahman Momin (1987: 35-46).

28. While this study is concerned with the Northern mass media's coverage of "Islamic terrorism" in the entire "Muslim world," statistics are not available of the reporting on the latter as a composite geographic entity.

29. Robert A. Hackett's (1989) study of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and Canadian Television Network's coverage of foreign news found that in 1980 the percentage of news items from the "Asian Middle East" was 21.1 and from North Africa 4.1; the figures for 1985 were 10.3% and 7.4%, respectively.
30. Although the foreign affairs coverage occupies 27.12% of the entire newshole of the English-language Canadian press, "Two-thirds of its attention is focused on the United States alone, with Western Europe following in second place (17.6%) and Asia a remote third" (Robinson, 1983: 15).

31. Canadian newspaper editors have identified the dearth of Canadian overseas correspondents as the major deficiency in international coverage (Soderlund, Krause and Price, 1991: 16).

32. According to a study carried out by the Ryerson School of Journalism, 87 to 96 percent of articles from six Canadian newspapers over a two-week period in 1991 contained "agenda" or official news. Peter Calamai, "Your 'reader-friendly' editors walk into the fiery furnace," The Ottawa Citizen (28/3/92: B5).

33. Referring to the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Susan Sontag notes, "Not to be underestimated ... is the pervasiveness of anti-Muslim prejudice, a reflex reaction to a people the majority of whom are as secular, and as imbued with contemporary consumer-society culture, as their other Southern European neighbors. To bolster the fiction that this is, at its deepest source, a religious war, the label "Muslim" is invariably used to describe the victims, their army and their government - though no one would think of describing the invaders as the Orthodox and the Catholics. Do many secular 'Western' intellectuals who might be expected to have raised their voices to defend Bosnia share these prejudices? Of course they do." (1995: 819).


35. For example, "The Sword of Islam" a documentary produced by Granada television presented as Muslims the members of a Lebanese group, who actually happened to be Christian and who had engaged in a campaign of bombing in Paris. See Media, Islam and Muslims (1990).

Chapter 1

Technological Myths and Violence
Myth and Communication

This chapter will trace the role of myth in linking the discourses on violence with the exercise of power. According to Antonio Gramsci, power is created and sustained by achieving consensus and exerting coercion.

Gramsci took over from Machiavelli the image of power as a centaur: half man, half beast, a necessary combination of consent and coercion. To the extent that the consensual aspect of power is in the forefront, hegemony prevails. Coercion is always latent but is only applied in marginal, deviant cases.¹

Consensus is arrived at through adherence to particular myths that legitimize the hegemony of those in power; the breakdown of consensus often leads to the use of coercion. Usually, both consensus and coercion are applied continually and symbiotically in the maintenance and extension of power. Consensus is generally created through the dominant discourses which explain power relationships within societies by using myths that justify the hegemonic status of certain individuals or groups and the marginal status of others. Existence of specific territories as distinct political units is rationalized in national mythologies, as is the grouping of their respective inhabitants as citizens of these states. State propaganda is necessarily couched in such myths.

The primary means by which societal consensus is formed and furthered in the industrialized West is integration propaganda (Ellul, 1969: 75). It has proved to be far more effective in its use by Western countries than the application of agitation propaganda by authoritarian governments in Eastern Europe and other regions of the world such as the Middle East. Failures to sustain consensus
through agitation propaganda have led to greater dependence on direct violence in repressive states. While the dominant national discourses operating in the West do fail in indefinitely maintaining "democratic" consensus, they have proved to be much more resilient and capable of overcoming or co-opting oppositional discourses. By convincing public opinion of the equality guaranteed under democracy they have been able to maintain privileges of socio-economic elites, violent challenges against whom are often characterized as "terrorism" against the entire national population (Baudrillard, 1990: 36). The integration propagandist strengthens the role of the state as the guardian of the citizen against what is portrayed as the irrational terrorist by identifying all members of the public as potential victims of the "random" violence of terrorism.

Once a definition of the situation in terms of the absence of basic structural conflicts and the presence of a common community of interests is accepted, the specific elements involved in the labelling of radical direct action fall into place. Given a basic agreement on ends and on the framework within which means should be debated, any redefinition of either or both must inevitably appear as essentially transitory 'deviation' by a minority. Secondly, if there are no structural inequalities in the distribution of wealth and power, there can be no fundamental reason for radical action. Consequently, attention is directed away from the underlying issues and the definitions of the situation proposed by radical groups, and fixes instead on the forms the action takes. (Murdock, 1973: 157)

Dominant discourses on terrorism usually highlight the violence of these challenges, which are generally separated by state propagandists from their socio-political causes. While the atrocities carried out by non-state groups are usually condemned, those by state agents are frequently underplayed.
Integration propaganda creates consensus by using the dominant political myths of society. Messages that reinforce the position of elites are framed within these basic myths and are disseminated through the mass media to retain the loyalty of audiences. Audiences of integration propaganda are responsive to these myths because they appeal to the fundamental premises that are shared by all, even opponents within a society (Ellul, 1965: 41). However, as discussed in the Introduction, a distinction is made here between oppositional discourses, which tend to subscribe to the same basic myths as the dominant discourses, and alternative discourses, which propose radically different definitions. Societal elites, who control dominant discourses, usually name as terrorists the organizations and individuals who promote alternative discourses with the use of violence, while the violence of the agents of the state is presented as being legitimate.

The operation of myth in the mass media has been discussed by a number of other scholars (Jacques Ellul, 1964 and 1965; Roland Barthes, 1973; John Fiske and John Hartley, 1978; George Szanto, 1978; Gaye Tuchman, 1981; Roger Silverstone, 1988; S. Elizabeth Bird and Robert Dardene, 1988; James Carey, 1989). It has been effectively shown that newspapers, radio and television couch information within the frameworks of society's myths. Propagandists use the rituals of social drama (Elliot, 1979; Chaney, 1983; Gerbner, 1992) to dramatize conflicts and to effect consensus on major issues.
As myth, news suggests that social and economic forces (never analyzed but detailed through the logic of the concrete) are 'primeval forces' akin to the bureaucratised legitimated institutions designed to cope with them. Social and economic forces as legitimated institutions become actors in a post-industrial passion play. (Tuchman, 1981: 90)

The agents of state institutions (particularly those dealing with law and order) usually play the roles of heroes, while the villains are presented as sources of deviance and disorder within such mythic-dramatic schemes; members of the public are often cast as the victims.

Although Jacques Ellul is not central to contemporary thought on discourse analysis, his work (especially Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes and The Technological Society) is of particular value here. This dissertation will not carry out a linguistic, stylistic, rhetorical, or semiotic examination of texts such as that carried out by Erving Goffman, Jürgen Habermas, or Teun van Dijk. Postmodern thinkers like Jean Baudrillard, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Jean-François Lyotard, and Paul Ricoeur, and postcolonialists like Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, and Homi Bhabha have added significantly to the understanding of the construction and manipulation of cultural discourses, but Ellul provides a comprehensive framework for an analysis of social myths which are utilized by integration propagandists. Going far beyond the study of linguistic and socio-cultural structures, the latter provides a mythological framework to consider a more fundamental basis on which "reality" is constructed. And similarly, while Jürgen Habermas, Alvin Gouldner, Christopher Lasch, and
John Ralston Saul have also contributed significantly to the understanding of the notions of progress and rationalism, Ellul's myth-based approach to technological society is much more pertinent for the present study. A major limitation of Ellul's work, however, is that it

seems to stop short of suggesting alternatives and solutions, leaving us intelligently unhappy. This is partly justified by Ellul's theological existentialism, which leaves the onus of choice and salvation on the individual. The only escape is individual transcendence. (Mowlana, 1986: 184)

This dissertation, in the concluding discussion, goes beyond the analysis of propaganda to study proposals for better international, inter-cultural understanding between Northern and Muslim societies.

Ellul maintains that propaganda can ideologically colour fundamental social myths to create and sustain consensus. He delineates the relationship between ideology and myth in the following way:

Ideology differs from myth in three important respects: first, the myth is imbedded more deeply in the soul, sinks its roots further down, is more permanent, and provides man with a fundamental image of his condition and the world at large. Second, the myth is much less "doctrinaire"; an ideology (which is not a doctrine because it is believed and not proved) is first of all a set of ideas. The myth is more intellectually diffuse; it is part emotionalism, part affective response, part a sacred feeling, and more important. Third, the myth has stronger powers of activation, whereas ideology is more passive (one can believe in an ideology and yet remain on the sidelines). The myth does not leave man passive; it drives him to action. What myth and ideology have in common, however, is that they are collective phenomena and their persuasive force springs from the power of collective participation. (1965: 116-17)
While ideology attempts to provide a "rational" thesis, myth is extra-rational and "has an explanation for all questions and an image of a future world in which all contradictions will be resolved" (ibid: 117). Ideology has to rise to the totalizing level of myth in order to move people more strongly to action - which is the purpose of propaganda.

It would be useful at this point to survey some of the many meanings of "myth." In popular usage, the term denotes "a false story" as opposed to a factual one: for example, ancient legends that involve the participation of supernatural forces are generally viewed by historians as being embellished or inaccurate accounts. Since the nineteenth century, myths have also been studied as "true stories" that carry profound meaning for those who adhere to them (Eliade: 1968: 1). Psychologists Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, although differing in the manner they treated myths, contributed significantly to the understanding of the subject. They established the importance of myths as bearing deeper truths about human nature that are revealed by the unconscious through dreams. Jung proposed that universal "archetypes" were held in common by all through a "collective unconscious" (1938), and that these were reproduced as symbols in the mythology of various peoples. It is at this psychological-spiritual level that myth is manifested in its most fundamental form. Jung believed that if human beings were deprived of religious mythology which contained symbols based on universal archetypes they would suffer alienation. According to Ellul (1969: 251), it is due to this fundamental need to respond to a totalizing worldview that the modern
secular individual, who has given up belief in religious myths, turns to the technological myths couched in contemporary propaganda.

In societal contexts, myths serve the function of creating consensus and solidarity by producing an image of order out of the chaos of daily existence. Etiological myths, which describe the origin of specific traditions and institutions, provide legitimacy for the structures of power. Such social myths are ultimately based on psychological-spiritual symbolism, which affects individuals at a fundamental level. Humanity appears to adhere to some basic social myths which give rise to variations under different cultural circumstances. The myth of Community has provided people with the bases to structure their collective identities: it helps determine what constitutes a family, a clan, a tribe, an ethnic entity, a cultural group, a religious community, a nation etc. This social myth is related to the myth of the Leader/Hero, often depicted as a patriarchal figure from whom issue the members of the collectivity (even modern states have a "father of the nation"). He is usually seen as having established the laws, customs and institutions of the community, and by his example determines how future leaders/heroes should comport themselves. Another basic social myth is that of Justice, which provides for the politics of the community. It marks out the parameters for what is considered right and wrong in the governance of the collective, how the leader will be selected, and in what manners deviance is to be dealt with.
According to Ellul, all social myths can be traced directly or indirectly to the myth of Paradise (1964: 191), which in technological society has given rise to the myth of Progress that prescribes the correct manners in which society should move towards utopia. (When the way to paradise is barred by the "Other," s/he is to be struck down or incarcerated so that progress may continue.) The notion of progress and of control over nature is based on a fundamental myth of technological society - that of Man:

not you or I, but an abstract entity. The technician intones: "We strive for Man's happiness; we seek to create a Man of excellence. We put the forces of nature at his disposal in full confidence that he will overcome the problems of the present" (Ellul, 1964: 390)

At the basis of all technical inventions and the justification for them is the myth of Man. It is his needs and interests that are presented as those that are fulfilled by the seemingly endless series of innovations.

Ellul's major contribution in this area is in elucidating how propaganda transmutes specific ideologies into variations of the basic social myths. Over the last few centuries, several ideologies (nationalism, democracy, socialism) have been transformed into myth. For their respective adherents they are not only rationally valid concepts for ordering their social, political, economic and cultural existences but also indicate what is fair and unfair, right and wrong, good and evil.

But ideology itself is a mere handmaiden of propaganda, whose real purpose is the propagation of the power of elites (1969: 196-202). The task that the propagandist
is faced with is choosing a particular ideology that is to be turned into myth, and how it is to be used most effectively.

Ellul suggests that at this point the ideology/myth responds to the religious needs of the spiritually alienated modern individual. Having been deprived of the meanings of life that religious myths provide, s/he seeks answers in the totalizing "religious" propaganda couched in modern society's myths (also see Jung, 1933):

The content of this religion is of little importance; what matters is to satisfy the religious feelings of the masses; these feelings are used to integrate the masses into the national collective. We must not delude ourselves: when one speaks to us of "massive democracy" and "democratic participation," these are only veiled terms that mean "religion." Participation and unanimity have always been characteristics of religious societies, and only of religious societies. Thus we return by another route to the problem of intolerance and the suppression of minorities. (Ellul, 1969: 251-252)

Having secured consensus among most of the masses through the religious force of modern myths, integration propagandists demonize those who continue to deny the truth of the dominant ideology as heretical "deviants" and "terrorists." Jung observed that "ideological conflict breeds many of modern man's 'demons'" (1964: 49).

The basic social myth of the Other has been effectively used to demonize internal and external challenges to the status quo. Various cultures have constructed particular stereotypes of specific enemies that are pressed into service whenever the latter pose a threat. Operating within the myth of the Other, people with other ideologies, socio-economic classes, religions, ethnicities, languages,
accents or appearances are given certain negative characteristics that are contrasted with the positive ones of the heroic members of the in-group who engage in struggle with them (Ellul, 1969: 163-64). Thus the particular stereotypes of the "Oriental despot," the "mad mullah," and the "Islamic terrorist," which have roots in the ways that Christian Europe viewed Muslims in medieval times, are detached from their origins and are manipulated according to the current needs of the Northern propagandist. Regardless of the precise form of the enemy, it is the myth of the Other that provides the archetypal basis of the particular version of the social myth. It is possible to present "Islam" as variously linked with terrorism, religious fundamentalism, anti-Semitism, and communism, because these contemporary images are based on the primordial Other. The enormous psychological-spiritual force of the old social myth is thus garnered in meeting ideological imperatives to provide for a post-Cold War enemy in the shape of the Muslim.

This study uses as an analytical framework a particular set of primary and secondary myths that Ellul identifies as existing in technological society:

In our society the two great fundamental myths on which all other myths rest are Science and History. And based on them are the collective myths that are man's principal orientations: the myth of Work, the myth of Happiness (which is not the same as the presupposition of happiness), the myth of the Nation, the myth of Youth, the myth of the Hero. Propaganda is forced to build on these presuppositions and to express these myths, for without them nobody would listen to it. (Ellul, 1969: 40)
Ellul does not dwell on these particular myths; but an extensive commentary appears in George Szanto's *Theater and Propaganda*. The latter indicates that the primary myths of Science and History reflect contrary ideals and serve society best when they function in dialectical interaction ...

implicit in the myth of Science is the concept that the absolute in human improvement can be achieved, the utopia can be built; the myth of History suggests that so long as man is based in a material universe his condition will continue to change and the concept of improvement must be modified and developed for each new generation. (1978: 40)

Szanto states that propagandists of the "liberal/conservative hegemony" primarily use the myth of Science in order to keep audiences passive and satisfied.

Dominant discourses of the technological state are based upon the interpretations of the myth of Science in order to maintain consensus about the continuing viability of the *status quo*. The myth of History, on the other hand, is kept invisible from the masses as it views all situations as continually changing and changeable. And the secondary myths of the Nation, Work, Happiness, Youth and the Hero - which can be viewed through either the myth of History or the myth of Science - are mainly presented by liberal/conservative integration propagandists through the latter primary myth. Basing the secondary myths on the myth of Science appears natural and logical to the modern individual, whose epistemological outlook has been conditioned by the predominantly rationalist, empiricist and positivist discourses of the technological civilization (Karim, 1992).
Violence and the Myth of the Nation

Dominant discourses on terrorism are necessarily based on the technological myth of the Nation, which has come to be accepted as the logical way to organize society. Terrorism is almost unthinkable outside the concept of the modern state, which has centralized socio-political control to an unprecedented level in human history (Weber, 1946: 78). An ideological framework that allows the concentration of all legitimate use of force in the hands of the state makes possible the characterization of political violence by persons not representing the state as terrorism. The idea of the nation-state was developed by late eighteenth and nineteenth-century European political theorists, in accordance with the myth of Science. It was an attempt to establish workable geographical bounds to which the individual mind could attach its loyalty and within which it could visualize the achievement of its goals. Szanto offers the following analysis:

The largest limitation deemed workable in a Europe where communication was exploding in perspective was one determined, usually, by language groups, and the nation was created as the largest area within which a person need function. Ideally a nation would unite all people of one kind. In practice a nation became a form which arbitrarily enclosed groups with contradictory class and social and ideological interests, and separated units within its borders from external but organically related groups. From the perspective of the myth of History, the notion that all people of one kind could be united within national boundaries is at best naïve and, more importantly, destructive to otherwise historically developed class relationships among people and among nations. Nonetheless, because some forms of horizontal limitations are essential, especially to bourgeois men and women, the nation persists, primarily for economic reasons, reasons essential to the
Whereas elites can generally move easily across borders and are frequently transnational actors, they optimize their control and power within the bounds of the nation-state.

The ever-present risk of the public's recognition of the artifice inherent in the "imaginary community" (Anderson, 1983) of the Nation is neutralized by dominant political discourses which play on popular nationalistic sentiments. Voices that speak about the contradictions between the myth of the Nation and the actual operation of the state are continually overwhelmed by the steady din of integration propaganda messages, which present the modern state as the natural and the only practical political model for organizing society. Hamid Mowlana points out that dominant paradigms in international relations research subscribe to the primacy of "nation-state as 'political' state" (1986: 178). Acknowledgement of the various failures of a particular state are explained away as isolated events, barring the way to a comprehensive re-examination of its power structure. In addition to class-based links mentioned by Szanto, one can also add the transnational ties of ethnicity and religion which are also overridden by various states. While kinship and religion are some of the key relationships upon which particular states are theoretically based, integration propagandists tend to emphasize some links while de-emphasizing others (Amin, 1990: 73-95). There are no real "nation-states" that comprise populations of a single national ethnic
group, yet volkish images of unitary "national" cultures persist. Frequently, those
who have been characterized as terrorists have often been marginalized in
particular societies by a combination of class, ethnic and religious factors (as in
Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka, the West Bank, and Lebanon).

Conformity to laws established by the state and obeisance to the
established political structures are promoted as an integral feature of good
citizenship. When this consensus among populations suffers serious breakdowns,
hegemonic elites usually resort to coercion to maintain their dominant status.
Infractions of laws are punishable by the violence inherent in the deprival of
property, freedom of movement, freedom to communicate, or of life itself. Within
the confines of prison, the socialization of individuals from a state of deviance to
one of conformity is carried out through "rehabilitation" (into a consensual
framework). Michel Foucault's (1979) study of the genesis of the modern prison
system looks at the ability of the state to exercise its power through the
incarceration of persons it has judged to be deviant. He demonstrates how the
violence involved in this process becomes accepted as a normal means of
exercising law and order, and is not seen as being violent at all. Such obscuring of
society's inherent violence by dominant political discourses leads to the view that
occurrences of politically-oriented direct violence against the state are disruptions
of the socio-political order, rather than being integral to the dynamics of the power
relationships within it.
This monopoly over violence is an important element in Max Weber's understanding of the modern state:

Today the relation between the state and violence is an especially intimate one. In the past, the most varied institutions - beginning with the sib [sic] - have known the use of physical force as quite normal. Today, however, we have to say that a state is a human community that (successfully) claims the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory ...
Specifically, at the present time, the right to use physical force is ascribed to other institutions or to individuals only to the extent to which the state permits it. The state is considered the sole source of the "right" to use violence. (1946: 78)

However, the modern state tends to downplay its own massive and systematic use of violence in various ways as it simultaneously emphasizes the uses of violence by its opponents. Past uses of direct violence to establish the currently-existing ruling elite and the structural violence used in sustaining the elite's dominance are generally made invisible through processes of dehistoricization. The hegemonic structure is depicted as being part of a natural and rational social order in which violence is an anomaly (Chomsky, 1986: 83-87). Thus, an American judge could declare: "Violence in pursuit of any goal is an aberration in American society and simply cannot be tolerated." Yet, when there arises a threat to the *status quo*, the state immediately marshals its own massive means of violence to stem it - such actions are usually portrayed as being integral to maintaining law and order. The applications of force to maintain the hegemonic structure are thus put outside dominant discourses on violence, which instead revolve around criminality,
irrationality and deviance. This becomes the cultural basis for conceptualizing violence in the modern state.

The state determines the forms of dissent and protest that are allowable and those that are punishable, thus defining the parameters within which dominant political discourses discuss violent opposition to incumbent elites as well as the state's response to it. Whether actions are described as "violent" or not is dependent on who is performing them and the context in which they are acting. As the term "violence" has acquired increasingly negative connotations, it is rarely associated with the state, which is seen as the source and guardian of law and order and as acting within a rational and moral framework - even when it is applying force. During the Gulf War fought between the United Nations Coalition and Iraq, president George Bush proclaimed that the American military's "use of force is moral" (Buruma, 1991: 9).

The Intifada uprising by Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip was generally referred to as "violence" or "terrorism" by the Israeli government, while its own repressive acts in these territories were depicted as police actions:

"We will continue to act against the violence until we stamp it out," Shamir, leader of the right-wing Likud bloc, told hundreds of cheering Jewish settlers during a tour of Herodion, eight kilometres south of Bethlehem [italics inserted].

Even before the Intifada, a 1987 Israeli government's Landau Commission found that "abusive interrogation methods" were systematically used by Israel's security police, Shin Bet, which had been lying to military courts in the West Bank and
Gaza for seventeen years (Neier, 1991: 841). Nevertheless, the commission's report recommended that none of the agents of the Shin Bet should be prosecuted or even disciplined either for abusing detainees or for perjury. At the same time, it also endorsed "non-violent psychological pressure" in the interrogation of security detainees and, if this did not suffice, "a moderate measure of physical pressure" (ibid.). While structural violence by the state remains almost completely invisible in dominant political discourses, even direct violence by its agents - when publicly uncovered - is usually left unpunished or dismissed with a slap on the wrist. On the other hand, the use of - and sometimes even the resistance to - violence by opponents of governments is highlighted as "terrorism." Thomas L. Friedman, a former New York Times correspondent in the Middle East, wrote in his book From Beirut to Jerusalem about the Israeli military's failure to respond to the slaughter of Palestinians and others in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps.

The Israeli soldiers did not see innocent civilians being massacred and they did not hear the screams of innocent children going to their graves. What they saw was a "terrorist infestation" being "mopped up" and "terrorist nurses" scurrying about and "terrorist teenagers" trying to defend them, and what they heard was "terrorist women" screaming. (1989: 163)

The dehumanization of all Palestinians as nothing but terrorists was so complete in their minds, that Israeli soldiers could not seem to bring themselves to think of them as victims.

A wide range of legitimate violence is available to the state, ranging from surveillance to execution, administered by its "bureaucracy of violence (police,
army, jails)" (Kertzer, 1988: 132). Use of direct violence by members of society not acting for the state is generally considered a serious crime, and the latter's retribution for these acts often takes the form of the violence involved in incarceration or death. The state's harshest measures are reserved for actions against itself. Political crimes such as treason and terrorism, whose definitions are provided by ruling powers, are depicted in dominant political discourses as being especially heinous, with their perpetrators generally being sentenced to long periods of imprisonment, or to execution. Labelling of political opposition to the government is carried out within the dramaturgy fostered by dominant discourses on terrorism according to the strength of the threats posed and the means used in the attempts to change the status quo. Whereas "activist" is used to denote those opponents who remain within what is considered legitimate opposition to the state, the term "terrorist" is often attached to someone who violently rejects the premises of the prevailing socio-political order. If the medium of reporting sympathises with the latter's cause they are called "freedom fighters" or "resistance members" - a more neutral approach may use "(urban) guerillas" (cf. Picard and Adams, 1988; Sainath, 1986). People who carry out state-sanctioned violence are "secret service operatives," "soldiers," "commandos," "tactical squads," "SWAT teams," "riots corps," "police," "prison guards," "executioners."

In a critique of the dominant discourses on terrorism in the American media, Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman propose an alternative discourse that
highlights the state's "wholesale terror" that is usually obscured by integration propagandists.

Among the many symbols used to frighten and manipulate the populace of democratic states, few have been more important than "terror" and "terrorism". These terms have generally been confined to the use of violence by individuals and marginal groups. Official violence, which is far more extensive in both scale and destructiveness, is placed in a different category altogether ...

Whatever the actual sequence of cause and effect, official violence is described as responsive or provoked ("retaliation," "protective retaliation," etc.), not as the active and initiating source of abuse. Similarly, the massive long-term violence inherent in the oppressive social structures that U.S. power has supported or imposed is typically disregarded. The numbers tormented and killed by official violence - wholesale as opposed to retail terror - during recent decades have exceeded those of unofficial terrorists by a factor running into the thousands. But this is not "terror"...

(Chomsky and Herman, 1979: 6)

Such alternative discourses that highlight the inherently violent nature of the state are continually thwarted by the much louder and ubiquitous dominant discourses of hegemonic elites. The very process of national consensus-creation, which works in tandem with that of coercion to maintain the status quo, makes the state's coercive character appear as part of the natural order. Operating culturally within the scientific myth of the Nation, dominant discourses on terrorism portray violent challenges to the state as aberrations that are to be dealt with forcefully by its agents, who work to restore society to the utopic ideal in which violence is non-existent.
Violence in the International System

A high degree of consensus based on the myth of the Nation is also present at the planetary level. Indeed it is part of what has emerged as the "global culture." Rather than disappear under pressures of globalization, national entities remain the effective loci for the vertical power structures of domestic elites. The continued existence of the international system of states depends on the wide acceptance of the myth of the Nation; and as at the domestic level, consensus works symbiotically with coercion to maintain the global status quo. Elite states within the "community of nations" retain power by acquiring consensus on the validity of their dominant status in international structures, or by using coercive means (Galtung, 1980). The massive violence of the colonial era that helped shape the political map of the world is rarely questioned in contemporary narratives of dominant international discourses. These discourses also implicitly condone the right of some states to deploy weapons of mass destruction while denying the same privilege to others. Individuals and states which challenge with violence the current configurations of power in the international system are termed "international terrorists" and "terrorist states."

The survival, if not the establishment, of hegemonic world orders is dependent on substantial levels of consent - the acceptance of the essential "rightness" of the order by participating states and the dominant classes within those states. National interests must be satisfied by the hegemonic world order, and civil societies must share the world view on which the hegemon's own domestic system is based. The military forces of a hegemon can then safely be directed against those seeking to interdict the operation of the political economy, outsiders or inferior insiders, on whom a
disproportionate share of the costs of systemic adjustment are imposed, rather than against challengers seeking to take control of the system. (Tétrault, 1988: 9)

Unlike the "challengers seeking to take control of the [hegemonic] system," who are engaged merely in an oppositional discourse within the system, the real enemy is the terrorist who is "seeking to interdict the operation of the political economy" through an alternative discourse.

Global trade and financial structures, which have their origins in the colonial era, are weighted in favour of the North which supports "the real terror network," according to Edward Herman (1985). He argues in an alternative discourse on terrorism that the international system has spawned a world order that forces various National Security States (NSSs) in the South to oppress their citizens so as to ensure ample profits for national elites and multinational corporations. The reasons given to populations to keep them pacified and accepting of their depressed conditions is the threat of communism and terrorism:

In sum, anticommunism, the "terrorist" threat, and militarism are being used to cover over savagely inhumane policies at home and even more scandalous policies abroad. Bank of America, Citibank, General Electric, Westinghouse, ITT and United Technologies may like tight money at home and in Brazil and Chile, and the supportive arms budgets and NSS repression, but what is good for these companies is bad for the majorities of people in Brazil, Chile, the United States, Western Europe and the rest of the world. Insisting on a single standard to be applied to terrorism in Poland, El Salvador, Guatemala, Turkey and Uruguay will quickly demonstrate that the real terror network is white, not red. There is a huge world commonality of interest in containing repression and an arms race designed to keep home population quiet and to allow Marcos, Pinochet and the rest of the Third World mafia to provide
favourable investment climate for multinational corporate interests. 
(Herman, 1985: 218-219)

Although some of the examples of repressive Southern regimes that Herman gives are dated and communism is no longer the threat it may have once been, the dominance of the North over the South continues. More recent examples of NSSs have included Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Kenya and Nigeria, whose governments' human rights records Northern discourses criticize from time to time, but whom Northern governments continue to support anyway. The pressure on poorer Southern governments to conform to the dictates of Northern-based conglomerates has increased considerably in recent years with phenomenal amounts in loans outstanding to Northern banks. Where it has been unable to acquire the consensus of local elites, the American superpower, acting alone or as the head of UN forces, has exerted its military might - in Grenada, Panama, Iraq, Somalia and Haiti (but not always successfully). Despite various challenges to it, the Northern-dominated global economic system remains intact (George, 1986; Hayter, 1981; Cabral, 1969). The primary players in the contemporary reorganization of global trade structures continue to be the US, the major states in the European Union (France, Germany, and UK) and Japan, as evidenced in the Uruguay Round of GATT negotiations, while the interests of the South are relegated to the sidelines (Watkins, 1992).

Whereas terrorism is sometimes carried out for mercenary, religious or pathological reasons, often its root causes in the South lie in the rejection of the
configurations of imperialist power prevalent even in the aftermath of colonialism. Operating within the myth of the Nation, European colonialism created a world of specifically demarcated countries where there had previously been vaguely-defined and shifting borders between administrative areas. People who had interacted with each other for millennia were split apart in order to be labelled the subjects of national governments dominated by narrow ranges of interests. Tribes, extended families, religious communities and other integral social, economic and cultural units in Africa, Asia and the "New World" were dissected by map-drawers sitting in European capitals. Commercial, linguistic and communications links of specific Southern countries stretched like umbilical cords to their "mother nations" in Europe, while ties with their immediate neighbours grew weak. Even following the "birth" of independent nations, economic and communications global infrastructures developed over decades of colonial rule have largely maintained the influence of Western nations over former colonies to this day (Amin, 1989; Rodney, 1972). Avuncular, non-colonizing states in Europe, North America and Australasia, have also benefitted from the current international order that is the legacy of colonialism. Indeed, in the aftermath of World War II and particularly in the post-Cold War era, "Uncle Sam" has emerged as the global patriarch.

Boundaries drawn by European cartographers are largely respected as sacrosanct and immutable divisions of peoples in the South despite the arbitrary natures of these borders. According to the myth of Science, the existing political
map of the globe has the potential for creating peace and happiness on earth. The myth of the Nation is extended to the global system of nation-states to support world-wide power structures in dominant international discourses, which themselves are shared around the planet. One of the most resilient legacies of the colonial era is the continuing pre-eminence of the concept of the modern nation-state in which power and violence are concentrated at a historically unprecedented level (see de Ferro, 1995). Born out of the specific experience of Europe, it continues to remain the framework within which political communities around the world arrange their respective internal and inter-national relationships. Alternative concepts of global structures, such as those based on traditional Muslim conceptions of the relations between various peoples of the world (cf. Hosein, 1989; uz-Zaman, 1986; al-Mujahid, 1985), are dismissed as being irrelevant in the modern age. The "war against terrorism" is generally cast in dominant international discourses as being fought between the forces of civilization and barbarism. This typification has deep cultural roots in the manners that European cultures have historically characterized the world, according to Stephen Rosow. The Eurocentric worldview has traditionally divided humanity into categories which have significantly influenced global discourses:

Internationalization is a process of movement from national to international society, a movement of incorporating those outside the boundaries of the system into it ... Three characterizations, three types of narratives of ... others have prevailed in the European tradition: the barbarian, the heretic, and the primitive. It is important that each of these narratives developed so as to enable relations between Europeans and others and constituted those
relations as different from relations within the European system. In particular cases, such as orientalism and US foreign policy toward the Soviet Union from the Wilson administration to Reagan, all three intertwine, drawing on each other and blending into one another. There is no single master narrative of "the other." They form a wealth of stories that provide meaningful framework for political action toward those who do not share the dominant system of international legitimacy. (Rosow, 1990: 294)

The Orient, particularly its Muslim components, has long been characterized as the barbaric Other in the polemics of medieval Europeans, who saw Orientals as hedonistic, despotic and violent (Daniel, 1960; Said, 1978). These historic stereotypes have been integrated into contemporary dominant international discourses which view the North as the domain of rationality, order and democracy, and the South as the loci of irrationality, instability and tyranny. The latter is also seen as a primary source of "international terrorism," presenting a major challenge to the world order created in the image of Europe. Medieval typifications of the Muslim Other, which still retain much of their ideological value, thus blend effortlessly with contemporary ones.

While the modern West is viewed as being only nominally Christian, its Muslim antagonist is generally seen as still holding on to medieval beliefs which were perceived as being integral to barbarism. Although Muslim (and other Southern) countries have been incorporated into the international system of states, they cannot, according to the Eurocentric international discourses, be considered equals to countries of the North. Therefore, in the dramaturgy of these dominant discourse the Eurocentric civilization is pitted against the barbaric world, which
throws up the challenges of "Islamic terrorism," "narco-terrorism," "nuclear terrorism" etc. that the former has to contain forcefully (see Netanyahu, 1987). In this way, the technological myth of the Nation, which legitimizes the hegemonic status of certain states on the global stage, merges with older worldviews to create a *dramatis personae* of heroes and villains who engage in a violent struggle that defines the international moral order. Jean Baudrillard notes that terrorism "has in fact become normal and generalized behaviour on the part of all nations and groups" - they are engaged in a struggle in which "hostage-takers do nothing but openly translate the truth of the system of dissuasion (which we counter with the system of morality)" (1990: 41-42). Dominant international discourses usually portray the West as rational, democratic and being on the side of the right and its opponents as irrational, undemocratic and evil. This serves to legitimize the use of violence by Western powers against the latter.

Power on the international scale is arranged even more overtly than the domestic one on the capability for violence. Economic dominance of the North, particularly that of Western countries, is a remnant of the essentially violent colonial period during which the presently-existing global trading structures were forcibly established (Worsley, 1984). According to Tétreault,

*Early in a hegemonic cycle, consent and cooperation are functions of the military victory that brought the hegemon to its position of leadership ... because victory in a hegemonic conflict aligns the hierarchies of power, the physical capabilities of states, and prestige, the authority of states is based on their reputation for power, especially military power.* (1988: 11)
In the post-colonial era, the "community of nations" has become institutionalized in the United Nations organization and other international and regional associations whose discourses are essentially based on the myth of the Nation. A well-recognized hierarchy of states exists in the structure of the United Nations (formed in the aftermath of World War II), that is based on military prowess: as "Permanent Members" of the Security Council, the five victors of the Second World War were accorded a status superior to all other UN member states. The United States and the Soviet Union (and later, just the US) became universally acknowledged in dominant international discourses as having superpower status due to their respective military strengths. In this lay the creation of a planetary moral order which assigns the security of the world to the "Big Five"; the two superpowers became the protagonists on the global stage who decide the fate of the planet in their armaments negotiations, at which all other states constituted little more than an attentive audience. China is the only Southern country that is a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council; neither India (with its population of over 900 million), the "Muslim world" (which constitutes around twenty per cent of the world's population) nor any other countries from Asia, Africa or Latin America have this status.

Global discourses on violence are dependent on dominant cultural conceptions about the international system. While the hegemonic nations deploy their military machines around the world, challenges to them, especially from Southern nations, often lead to the characterizations of the latter as "terrorist
states" (Chomsky, 1987). This serves to justify massive military action by the powerful states against the weak ones. Sub-national groups within states which use violence against the domestic or global power elite are even more susceptible to being labelled terrorists in international discourses as, in accordance to the myth of the Nation, they lack any legitimacy to use violence in the world of states.

Other Secondary Myths

Ellul notes that the five secondary technological myths of the Nation, Work, Youth, Happiness, and the Hero continually interact with each other in the discourses of integration propagandists. The myth of the Nation provides the socio-political parameters for the secondary myths within which to operate. The national economy becomes the primary frame for the myth of Work, national security for that of Happiness, and service to the nation for those of Youth and the Hero. These perspectives provide the dominant fields of meanings for the mass media.

The myth of Work, operating within the primary myth of Science, presents the cost and the functional efficiency of commercial goods and services as the most important economic characteristics. Interpreted through the myth of History, it would emphasize, from a Marxist point of view, the labour of the worker (Szanto, 1978: 41-45) and, from a religious point of view, the spiritual elements of human activity (Shariati, 1979: 97-110). The myth of History would also consider relevant the uses to which the product would be put, making the worker
herself/himself a participant in the historical process and in helping determine the future of her/his local and, possibly, global environment. However, dominant discourses operate continually to subvert alternative modes of conceptualization that would threaten the hegemonic structure.

It is the function of the propagandist to thwart ... [the] process toward awareness and social self-control at every step. Since the function of technology is to perpetuate itself, the individual or group must not be allowed to control any part of the hegemony's production or any of its economic powerbase. But should he or she gain any control at all, another branch of the propaganda corps must render him passive, satisfied, and unwilling to function as a member of a group with ends beyond those of corporate production. (Szanto, 1978: 43)

Dominant political discourses use the myth of Work together with the myth of the Nation to portray the untroubled functioning of the systems of production and consumption as the correct and normal state of being in the modern technological state. Interruptions such as labour strikes or consumer boycotts are usually portrayed in the mass media as aberrations (Karim, 1987). The myth of Work would have all members of society go about performing their assigned tasks within the nation-wide systems of production and consumption as if functioning like a giant clockwork machine.

This myth is at times also pressed into service by integration propagandists to explain the psychological motivations of terrorists. Conor Cruise O'Brien, a leading Northern integration propagandist, employs it along with those of Work, Youth, Happiness, and the Nation\textsuperscript{12} to expound on the roots of terrorism:
Today's world - especially the free, or capitalist, world - provides highly favourable conditions for terrorist recruitment and activity. The numbers of the frustrated are constantly on the increase, and so is their awareness of the life-style of the better-off and the vulnerability of the better-off. (1986: 65)

This "expert," in attempting to assign causal responsibility for terrorism, does not bother to the explore structural reasons that could help explain why the "numbers of the frustrated are on the rise," but focuses instead on the personal and the psychological. A perspective favoured by the myth of History would have investigated the economic situations at the root of the frustration of the poor and the right of the "better-off" to enjoy a more comfortable life-style; it would have also looked at the failure of dominant discourses on development which have promised jobs and prosperity for all. A religious viewpoint may have attempted to explore the failure of traditional religions in meeting the spiritual needs of youth.

However, the (Weberian) scientific explanation of the myth of Work that guarantees utopia under capitalist economic regimes is operative in O'Brien's arguments: a work ethic and education should inevitably lead to happiness within the territorial confines of the modern state. That utopia did not materialize within the existing socio-political arrangements is blamed on the "frustration" and "boredom" of the young, not on socio-political factors. The dominant discourses on terrorism generally de-politicize, and thus de-legitimize, the causes of terrorism by personalizing them. 13

Szanto sees the passive myth of Happiness and the active myth of Youth as remnants of late 18th and early 19th century romanticism that glorified
individualism. These two myths engage in struggle within the person. "Although the myth of Happiness implies a desire for security and comfort (Science), or resolution and synthesis (History), it can nonetheless live side by side with the myth of Youth: exploration and discovery, potential, the future, risk for great reward" (Szanto, 1978: 46). The inner creative conflict in the individual caused by the two secondary myths is used by the integration propagandist to conjure the illusion of escape from technological alienation and the constraints of political control. Apart from their dyadic interaction, these two myths also play a complementary function within the pentad of the secondary myths, particularly with that of the Nation. The mass media, adhering to dominant political discourses, glorify the zest of youth and its pursuit of happiness usually within the framework of national laws and norms. Youth can find ultimate happiness through service to the state, which is presented as the ideal territorial locus for the actualization of utopia.

Military service to the state is glorified in the mass media mainly through depictions of selfless dedication of young men engaging in combat against overwhelming odds. Television commercials for recruitment into the armed forces exploit the myth of Youth, offering "exploration and discovery, potential, the future, risk for great reward" (ibid: 46). Military facilities are often made accessible for commercial film companies to produce what are little more than feature-length advertisements for various branches of the armed forces. They show young soldiers, airmen and sailors using highly sophisticated armaments
with accomplished skill and bravado; in accordance with the primarily scientific interpretation of the myth of Youth, the answer to the world's problems is to be found through technological means, not in the continual re-evaluation of socio-political circumstances through the myth of History. Media highlighting of the use by Western air forces of high-tech weaponry such as "smart bombs" in the coverage of the Gulf War in 1991 stands out as a key example of this tendency. The Adonis-like appearance of the young airmen and the seeming grace and efficiency with which they accomplish destruction as well as the aesthetic appearance and pyrotechnic effects of their state of the art armaments are all emphasized in these productions.

The myth of the Hero, which is also often narrated in the context of service to the state, is a vital tool in keeping the masses pacified. In the dominant discourse of Western literature, the hero usually comes from outside to regenerate a decaying society (ibid: 49-52). After having saved the community, s/he either moves on or settles down into it. Both these patterns work well for the integration propagandist's purposes: they serve to further the illusion that an individual in the form of a white knight can alleviate a society's problems. According to Szanto,

The propagandist will usually admit that the society is not perfect. But he will claim it is perfectible, a priori within the myth of Science, and the shining knight, through individual action, can save or improve or ameliorate or cleanse the society, and bring it closer to perfection. The propagandist nurtures the myth of the Hero because he knows it is impotent in fact but powerful in image - he knows that the individual alone can never alter the economic base of the capitalist state. (50)
The hero cannot be allowed to be outside the control of the hegemony: her/his image is shaped in accordance with the needs of the integration propagandist.

However, within the myth of History the hero is organically united with her/his community, operating in the framework of practical realities. S/he works within the context of the group, leaving it "only to attain the historical perspective needed by the group, returning to it constantly" (ibid: 51). Hegemonic political discourses, which legitimate particular ways of viewing public problems, discourage this form of hero from gaining prominence in the public mind since s/he will be seen as operating in accordance with the requirements of the masses. It will also prevent her/him from appearing in opposition to the state: such a position is reserved for the "antihero" or villain (often the role played by the terrorist):

... the propagandist gains double credit by branding the man who cannot live within the normal confines of the state and suffers outside it an antihero, someone in opposition to the Hero of the myth of Science, hence someone opposed to the values of the liberal/conservative state. The negative label makes the reject, according to the repressive morality of the hegemony, a bad example of humankind. (Szanto, 1978: 52)

Usually, the dramaturgy related to the struggle between the hero and the villain involves the persecution of a third figure, the victim, and her/his liberation by the hero. The casting of these characters in mass media productions is generally done in manners that ideologically support dominant discourses.

In the New World, the myth of the Hero has been linked even more strongly than in Europe to that of the Nation: this person (usually a male) is
visualized in the context of the frontiersman pushing the bounds of the pale, denoting the eternal possibility of extending the borders under the sway of civilization. This view has another variation in the telling of the settlement of European Jews in Palestine in the first half of this century (Rodinson, 1973). The image of the heroic founding of the state of Israel in a "savage" desert land is very much part of the scientific interpretation of the myth of the Nation: the more comprehensive survey of the socio-political background of what was a well-settled and relatively fertile country required by the myth of History is not carried out in dominant international discourses. Similarly, the violent opponent to the state violence of Israel is portrayed as the barbaric and anti-heroic terrorist who fights against reason, order, civilization and progress that the heroic state embodies.

When the nation can no longer expand its territory its corporate heroes continue broadening the scope of their activities extra-territorially. For example, the success of American fast food chains in establishing restaurants around the world is covered with enthusiasm by the North American mass media and is usually presented in the context of an eternally expanding frontier - with enterprising entrepreneurial explorers boldly going where no Western corporate capitalist has gone before. Such economic expansion is usually accompanied by cultural, technological, military and political expansion abroad, and is viewed in dominant discourses as following the natural course of "progress." Often, the establishment and operation of multi-national organizations in the developing
world is carried out with direct or structural violence (Herman, 1985). Violent opposition to such extra-territorial dominance is depicted as being terroristic in the discourses of dominant powers.

Integration propagandists therefore are able to engineer consensus (domestically and internationally) on violence and terrorism by naming it as such, by defining their causes and prescribing solutions for them, and by legitimating particular ways of viewing the problem at hand. The technological myth of the Nation is pivotal in influencing the mass media's portrayal of terrorism, which is generally characterized by the personalization of conflicts, and by providing depoliticized and dehistoricized perspectives. Opponents of the state who use violence against it are inevitably named as "terrorists" by mainstream journalists and other integration propagandists. On the other hand, direct and indirect violence of the state is veiled in dominant political discourses. Integration propagandists also work within the dominant fields of meanings provided by the other secondary technological myths to create societal consensus regarding the use of violence, thus maintaining the hold on power by hegemonic elites. On the planetary scale, the violence of the structural inequities of the world's economic systems seems invisible to the mass media in the North. Violent opposition from the South to these entrenched international infrastructures often makes for the labelling of "terrorist states" and "international terrorists"; this then allows for corrective action by Northern powers to restore "order" to the world stage. These perspectives have become integral to the "global culture" manifested in
international relations and in the operation of organizations such as the United Nations.

Notes


2. However, as indicated in the Introduction, analytical concepts concerning social cognition will, however, be borrowed from van Dijk (1988, 1991, 1993).


4. While members of the European Union have come together to form a supra-national entity, the individual states continue to remain the primary building blocks of the EU.


7. Also see B’Tselem (1991). An Israeli judge who found Israeli police responsible for initiating the violence which killed 19 Palestinians on the Haram al-Shareef/Temple Mount in Jerusalem in October 1990, also recommended against putting the police on trial for the killings. (The Ottawa Citizen 19/6/91: A7). According to the Palestine Human Rights Information Center in Jerusalem, in the 43 months of the Intifada until April 1991, at least 946 Palestinian civilians had been killed and 112,000 had been wounded by Israeli troops, 62 had been "deported," 15,500 had suffered "administrative detention" (without charges or trial), and 9,856 military curfews had been imposed on communities over 10,000 people; additionally, Israeli occupation authorities had demolished 1,860 Palestinian homes, uprooted 103,120 trees, and confiscated 97,674 acres of Palestinian land in the West Bank and Gaza. (Palestine Mission to Canada, 28/6/91: 2).

8. A clear example of this tendency was the expulsion by the British government of a Saudi dissident resident in London: "In a three-page note to David Hastie - [British aircraft builder] Vickers's international relations director and another former MoD [Ministry of Defence] official - Sir Colin [head of exports in the ministry] describes a discussion with Dick Evans, chief executive of British Aerospace, who reported anxiety in the CIA 'and their counterparts in this country' about the impact of Mr al-Mas'ari's campaign against the Saudi royal family and the presence of Western troops in the kingdom. As well as the exchanges with Mr Evans and Mike Rouse of British Aerospace, the Vickers memo refers to contacts with Sir David Lees, chairman of GKN, over the al-Mas'ari case. Based on the al-Yamamah deal signed by Margaret Thatcher in the mid-1980s, all three firms depend on huge Saudi deals or hope to attain them." Seumas Milne and Ian Black, "Arms bosses' secret plot," The Guardian Weekly (14/1/96: 10).

9. Attempts to reorganize the existing structures of hegemony are met with strong resistance from those states in dominant positions as well as their mass media. For example, the support of Western mass media for the United Nations dropped dramatically when representatives of Southern states began asserting themselves in opposition to the dominant position of Northern governments,
particularly that of the United States. The challenge of the new states to the existing international economic and communications orders drew a sustained chorus of criticism from the Western mass media. Cf. Roach (1987: 36-51).

10. Richard K. Ashley shows that although power relationships are conceptualized in opposite manners in domestic and international politics, a process of dehistoricization, employing "the discourse of realism," enables both the individual state and the "community of nations" to emerge as "natural" entities (1987: 403-32).

11. The communist bloc was cast in the mode of "the heretic," having left the fold of the capitalist, Christian West (Rosow, 1990: 296-97).

12. This is not meant to imply that O'Brien consciously composed his writing to incorporate in it the various technological myths, but that these myths underlie the discourses of the hegemonic elites. O'Brien has been Professor of Humanities at New York University, former Chief Editor of the London-based Observer and a member of the Irish Senate (A. Ahmed 1992: 189).

13. Another frequently-used personalization technique by state propagandists to de-politicize terrorism is the characterization of terrorists as irrational and fanatical. Geraldine Finn (1982) and Louise Marcil-Lacoste (1982) present feminist critiques of violence showing how women are subordinated through the use of the dominant "discourse of reason" in the settlement of disputes. While reason is shown as being operational in the actions of hegemonic persons, irrationality or deviance is usually presented as the cause of the reaction of subordinate ones.

14. This "coca-colonization" of the world is the most overt manifestation of the continuing Western cultural hegemony over other civilizations: in influencing the world's consumer trends through the globally dominant mass media, the Western corporate infrastructure can benefit from the desire of the rest of the world to acquire the goods displayed in the movies, television programs and books produced in the West. Cf. Mowlana (1986: 75-92).
Chapter 2
Journalistic Constructions of Terrorism
Ideological Operations of the Mass Media

The pivotal role of the mass media in the development of dominant discourses on violence and terrorism is studied in this chapter. While mainstream journalists do not overtly subscribe to official views on terrorism, the dominant fields of meanings on the subject that they choose from inevitably lead them to produce only certain (hegemonic) interpretations of political violence. As Joseph Gusfield (1981) has demonstrated, propagandists generally follow a particular course in engineering consensus on the nature and resolution of a specific issue. The mass media help in the naming of the problem as "terrorism," in seeking causal responsibility for it (usually in the deviance of terrorists), assigning responsibility to the state to deal with it, and legitimating dehistoricized and depoliticized ways of viewing the phenomenon. Terrorism coverage lends itself particularly well to dramaturgical renderings. This mode of portrayal is able to garner hegemonic discourses on violence to construct scenarios in which those who wield "good violence" battle with the perpetrators of "bad violence" in order to re-establish order in the universe. Stories that more perfectly fit the preferred scripts are usually given prominence by the mass media, while those that present alternative discourses either never appear in newspapers and electronic broadcasts or are given a low profile. The massive structural and direct violence carried out by dominant states is rarely mentioned, whereas the smaller-scale terrorism of some non-hegemonic states and groups is highlighted.
Integration propaganda in the technological state would not be possible without the mass media (Ellul, 1969: 102), in which it appears constantly and consistently and which are either owned by the state or concentrated in the hands of a few private owners (Kent, 1981; Bagdikian, 1987). Operating within a particular ideological system, mass media workers consciously or unconsciously produce integration propaganda that serves the overall interests of the societal elites. The latter ensure, through the various mechanisms of censorship, licensing, access and advertising, that the mass media primarily disseminate continual and overriding streams of messages that promote the social and economic values helping to maintain the status quo. Stuart Hall explains how, although it is ostensibly autonomous of the political and economic hegemonic elites, professional journalism in the liberal state operationally and structurally tends to reproduce dominant discourses:

The professional code is 'relatively independent' of the dominant code, in that it applies criteria and transformational operations of its own, especially those of a technico-practical nature. The professional code, however, operates within the 'hegemony' of the dominant code. Indeed, it serves to reproduce the dominant definitions precisely by bracketing their hegemonic quality and operating instead with displaced professional codings which foreground such apparently neutral-technical questions as quality, 'professionalism' and so on. The hegemonic interpretations of, say, the politics of Northern Ireland, or the Chilean coup or the Industrial Relations Bill are principally generated by political and military elites: the particular choice of presentational occasions and formats, the selection of personnel, the choice of images, the staging of debates are selected and combined through the operation of the professional code ... the professionals are linked with the defining elites not only by the institutional position of broadcasting itself as an 'ideological apparatus' but also by the structure of
access (that is, the systematic 'over-accessing' of selective elite personnel and their 'definition of the situation' in television). (1980: 136-37)

While journalists in liberal democracies may regularly criticize the day-to-day functioning of the administrative regime, the established structures of power are rarely brought into question. The state usually appears in the mass media as the locus and the guardian of social order. Those who are dominant are generally depicted as representing the populace, which is portrayed as the embodiment of the state. Within this dramaturgical framework, attempts to upset societal power structures are generally characterized as attacks on the entire population.

Therefore, whereas the mass media's coverage may not always coincide with dominant political discourses, the two usually coalesce almost completely during crisis situations, such as those involving terrorism. On the other hand, alternative media (which report from left-wing, right-wing, ethnic, religious etc. perspectives) tend to present materials that continually question specific aspects of the status quo's structures and operations; however, these media remained marginalized and usually do not have broad-based audiences.

Denied access to the mainstream media, non-dominant groups attempt to pass over the "news threshold" (Galtung and Ruge, 1965: 68) through unconventional acts that will appear newsworthy.

Take the case of social movements, particularly those in pre-bureaucratic stages. Not only do they have little access to newswriters, but additionally, they seek to promote issues by offering facts contrary to those of centralized sources; they challenge the news-frame. Accordingly, to compete with the 'logic
of the concrete' ... embedded in both newswork and centralized sources, they must assemble in the wrong places at the wrong time to do the wrong thing ... (Tuchman, 1981: 89-90),
even to the extent of carrying out atrocities. Frantz Fanon (1963) points out that one way in which militant groups attempt to appropriate the power of the state is by partaking in the very violence that is an integral aspect of the state. In trying to break the monopoly of governments over political violence they symbolically hope to demonstrate the weakness of the ruling elites (Kertzer, 1988). Militants seek to shake the credibility of hegemonic classes and initiate alternative discourses on power with their public uses of violence (Dowling, 1986). Those who challenge the state with political violence specialize in high-profile acts of sabotage, destruction and kidnapping; by severely disrupting the social order which a government is supposed to be guarding they reveal its vulnerability. However, such attempts at influencing dominant political discourses are generally unsuccessful as these very discourses' assumptions regarding the uses of violence are strongly influenced by the socio-political elites. While the symbolic acts of militants may gain the temporary attention of audiences, they are systematically recoded by mainstream journalists who present them as deviant and irrational. Adherence to the myth of the Nation by the mass media determines that their discourses on terrorism will portray violence by anyone other than the state as an aberration; the use of force by those who are not in power is presented to the masses primarily as a disruption of the social order and the targeting of the entire population by terrorists, rather than as a revolt against the status quo.³
The almost continual propaganda failure of groups using political violence against the state can be attributed to the regular reinterpretation and recoding of their actions by journalists. Due to their inferior numbers and resources compared to those of state security agencies, terrorists generally carry out acts that are necessarily selective and of a small-scale. These attempts at influencing discourses on power require their actions to be heavy in symbolism. However, the constellations of symbols offered by these groups are usually rearranged by the mass media and thus rendered incoherent in their redefinition.

The selection of codes, those which are the preferred codes in the different domains, and which appear to embody the 'natural' explanations which most members of the society would accept (that is, which appear to incarnate the 'rationality' of our particular society) casts these problematic events, consensually, somewhere within the repertoire of the dominant ideologies. (Hall, 1979: 343)

Placed within the contexts provided by dominant discourses on terrorism, the acts of violence become "senseless," "irrational," "random" and "barbaric."

The textual content of the mass media can be analyzed through cognitive macrostructures such as frames, scripts and models to which members in a society subscribe. Frames organize a series of occurrences into an event (Tuchman, 1978: 7; Goffman, 1974: 10-11). According to Tuen van Dijk, scripts are cognitive clusters which contain all we know in our culture about a specific stereotypical type of episode. People may share scripts about shopping in the supermarket, having a birthday party, or demonstrating ... As with any other discourse type, the media rely heavily on such socially shared knowledge and beliefs in the coherent and comprehensible account of special events that require
knowledge or beliefs organized in scripts, for example about civil war, terrorist attack, political meeting, voting or 'revolution'. (1988: 13)

Scripts hold shared type-cast information about how people act in certain kinds of situations. Journalists, when producing news, make the implicit assumption that their audiences possess the same scripts as them, thus seeking to make their accounts rational and coherent to their readers, listeners, or viewers. Distinct from the abstract nature of the information held in scripts, models carry impressions about specific, identifiable individuals or groups behaving in particular manners in certain kinds of circumstances.

For instance, if we process media reports about the attack of the U.S. Air Force on Libya in April 1986, we build a mental model of that event with the help of the information from these reports. Part of that particular model, however, is also instantiated [sic] fragments of general information we already had about military operations, Libya, the Mediterranean, the Middle East, or terrorism - information that might have been derived from previous media reports. Later texts about this event may be used to update the model with new details, and that is precisely one of the central cognitive functions of news discourse. (ibid: 22)

The media in technological society have a major role in not only creating but sustaining particular ways of thinking by continually couching information in dominant frames, scripts and models. Analyses of media texts below and in other chapters will demonstrate how this is done.

The dominant script of terrorism holds that it is always senseless and without historical justification, and that the reasons offered by terrorists are to be disregarded or considered "radical," "extremist," and "fanatical." A member of the
Provisional Irish Republican Army's council offered the following justifications for murdering Lord Mountbatten, in an interview published in France:

First of all, he was a member of the Royal Family, of a monarchy which has done nothing other than bring misery to our people. He had considerable stature within the British military machine which for the past eight centuries, and especially during these past twelve years, has enslaved Ireland. But apart from his membership of the British Royal Family, he was also an absentee landlord - that is to say a landed proprietor in the old English tradition in Ireland, who while living in London, benefits from the exploitation of the lands of his great house in Ireland, living there just once a year, during August.
So killing this man had the aim of making the world understand - first and foremost the British - that there's a state of war in this country. Given his personal importance there was inevitably going to be enormous publicity attached to this operation ... we had no hatred for him as a person. It is the society, the military and the political machine he symbolised that we were aiming at.
(Schlesinger et al., 1983: 31)

This rationale offered by the group was not published by the British mass media, which went on to impose the dominant model in reporting the incident, drawing from previous acts of terrorism carried out by Irish republican terrorists. The banner headlines of the tabloids Daily Express and the Daily Star screamed "THESE EVIL BASTARDS" and "MURDERING BASTARDS," respectively, as the rest of the mainstream press joined the chorus in a less shrill tone (ibid).

The London dailies eclipsed the Provisional IRA’s intended political symbolism by highlighting the violent means used to express it. The legitimation of a depoliticized and dehistoricized view of terrorism is a major theme in its framing by the mass media and in the construction of consensus about this public problem.
The proceedings of the Second Conference on International Terrorism held in Washington in 1984, convened by the Jerusalem-based Jonathan Institute, are revealing of how several "prominent American and European journalists" attending the gathering themselves viewed their role in the coverage of terrorism. Those attending agreed to the basic position that the media ... and the terrorists need each other. There is a symbiotic relationship among them. Without television terrorism loses its raison d'être. Without terrorism TV is deprived of one of its most dramatic and popular objects. (Conference, 1985: 186)

This primary assumption about terrorism implied that the phenomenon does not have an existence outside of its media coverage. It served to cut off the causal roots of terrorist movements, thus opening them to redefinition by the discussants. Charles Krauthammer, senior editor of The New Republic, an American monthly, maintained that As the primary reason of terrorism is to gain access to the media, it requires the presence of an interpreter to tell us what it means. This is essential to the relationship between terrorism and the media. (Ibid.) Krauthammer was saying that members of the public should not be allowed to hear and interpret the terrorists' words and symbols for themselves: these necessarily have to be given "correct" interpretations by mass media integration propagandists.

John O'Sullivan of the London Daily Telegraph, who attended the Washington conference, subscribed to the disdain of governments toward media access for terrorists:
TV is a great leveller: Terrorists tend to become treated not as murderers but as some sort of normal politicians. Thus if the terrorists are given the means to communicate their views, the media and the press become simple transmitters of the terrorists' ideas ... It is only pious poppycock produced by journalists that says we need to interview them to know their views. We know their views anyhow. (188)

He seemed to imply that while it is dangerous to let terrorists speak through the media, it is proper for the media to be transmitters for the views and ideas of "normal politicians." Alain Besançon, columnist for the French weekly, L'Express, brought up what he saw as the connection between terrorism and Marxism-Leninism: "the media must be constantly aware of this fact. For what is at stake is a basic view of the world - theirs or ours. We must surely be able to say that ours is a better one." Journalistic objectivity is not even accorded lip service here as these newsmen declare themselves the ideological guardians of the status quo. They openly assert their primary function in such instances as being interpretive rather than reportorial. Under attack from governments for giving terrorists too much publicity and fearing the loss of their "most dramatic and popular objects" these journalists appear to be bending over backwards to affirm the basically integrative and consensual role that the major media play in society. As integration propagandists who subscribe to the myth of the Nation, they hold that political violence by the government's opponents ought necessarily to be depicted in a negative light. The rites of the dramaturgy of terrorism in presenting a consensual view of the nation-state demand the manichean polarization of good and evil into pure shades of white and black.
Dramaturgical Portrayals of Terrorism

It is clear that the mainstream media play an important role in the development of the dominant discourses on violence and terrorism. Having adopted dominant definitions regarding "fair" and "unfair" uses of violence, they symbolically portray good and bad, right and wrong, winners and losers, and the heroes, villains and victims in society. Through such dramaturgical engineering of reality, the media construct an elaborate societal hierarchy, placing various kinds of people - men, women, minorities, children, the elderly, persons with disabilities etc. - in specific inter-relationships of dominance and subservience. George Gerbner, who has headed a long-running study of media violence, states:

The pattern of violence and victimization projects a mean world in which everyone is at risk (though some more than others). Its calculus of danger and ratio of winners and losers sets up a structure of power that puts every social group in its "place" ...

(1990: 18)⁶

Within this scenario, heroes, villains and victims are fashioned according to the ways in which they use or are affected by violence. The state is usually represented by middle-class White males (and only occasionally by token White women and non-White individuals) whose violence is legitimate and is aimed at villains, usually non-White males who have harmed victims that are generally women, children and older people.⁷

Kenneth Burke and Hugh Dalziel Duncan have made a significant contribution to the dramatistic method of analyzing texts. According to Burke,
Dramatism is a method of analysis and a corresponding critique of terminology designed to show that the most direct route to the study of human relations and human motives is via a methodological inquiry into cycles or clusters of terms and their functions. (1968: 445)

Dramatistic analysis involves study of actors, actions, scenes, purposes, and agencies described in a text. However, in looking at the dramaturgical aspects of media texts, the present inquiry will be limited to scrutinizing the presentation of actors and their actions. The terminology used in media constructions of the hero, the villain and the victim will be of special interest.

The very nature of the phenomenon of violent opposition to the state lends itself to a particularly dramatic rendering. This is used by dominant discourses in the creation of a moral order in which only some individuals and institutions have the right to carry out violence; state agents are cast as heroes who protect citizens against the random and irrational violence of terrorists. Such dramaturgy, however, does allow some room for transmutation of characterizations: a hero can become a victim (martyr) when harmed by the villain-terrorists, and victims can become heroes when they kill or capture the latter or when they bravely withstand their violence. But villain-terrorists cannot become heroes or "worthy victims" (Herman and Chomsky, 1988: 58-60). Citizens, who play the role of actual or potential victims in this scenario, do not generally carry out violence, but are either harmed by the violence of the terrorist and/or are saved by that of the state agent. When citizens, influenced by such portrayals, become convinced of their victimhood at the hands of villainous terrorists and of their need for protection
from heroic state agents they are more willing to acquiesce to the right of state
agents to carry out violence. Structural violence (Galtung, 1981) of the state or of
socio-economic institutions is usually invisible in these cultural constructions.

The dramaturgy of the "war against terrorism" is important in sustaining
the legitimacy of the status quo because the moral counterweight of terrorists and
other nefarious enemies of the state helps affirm (through combat between the
forces of good and evil) the goodness of the status quo. Regular media depiction
of the drama of the "war against terrorism" therefore becomes a vital ritual for the
integration propagandist to assert the continuing viability of the existing socio-
economic order. In this, violence operates as a rite of symbolic cleansing that rids
society of evil:

If sociodramas of blood, violence, and war are mounted as rites of
purification, then torture, killing, and wounding become not only
"necessary," but "noble." These sociodramas are not only merely
symbolic screens, or metaphors in which we clothe the reality of
politics, economics and sex. They are social reality because they
are forms of social integration. (Duncan, 1965: 237)

For this reason it is important for integration propagandists to give
disproportionate levels of prominence, space and time to violent challenges to the
state even though the actual damage caused by them is insignificant when
compared to other forms of violence and destruction that exist in society.8

George Gerbner notes that

Approaches [in the media] that focus on aggression and
lawlessness view violence from the law enforcement point of view.
They distract attention from official violence and state terrorism,
and from economic and social conditions most closely related to individual violence and crime. (1992: 100)

During "terrorism crises," the mass media generally highlight perceived threats to society. Whereas material calling attention to the violent nature of society does appear from time to time, it is rare and forms part of alternative discourses. When information is published comparing the deaths caused by anti-status quo political violence with those caused by other means, it usually appears far from the front pages of newspapers which usually are the vehicles for dominant discourses. For example, when The Ottawa Citizen used a Reuter piece on November 22, 1988 whose headline was "Car crashes out-kill Ulster's political violence," it was placed on page 18 of the newspaper's D section. Occasionally, the mass media may give some prominence to an alternative discourse; for example, on February 16, 1989, the Citizen's "letter of the day" read:

The equivalent of 10 jumbo jets, each carrying 240 children, soundlessly crashed today.
What is amazing is that no groups claimed responsibility for the deaths that resulted. No inquiries were set up to determine how these horrible deaths could have been prevented. There were no huge, black and screaming headlines across the front pages of newspapers around the world. Nothing.
Why is it that we accept as inevitable the deaths by starvation of 2,400 children each day in a world where we produce more than enough for every man, woman and child?

A rare "think piece" from the Knight-Ridder new service in the Citizen, titled "Violent crime integral part of U.S. culture" (12/88/89: B5), was critical of the indifference to the violence in American society. However, as usually happens in these cases, it failed to address structural problems - instead blaming the violence
only on illegal drugs, gangs and "the lack of values." Notwithstanding such occasional airing of a non-dominant views on violence in society, the dramatic and single-minded front-page focus on terrorism continues unabated.

As Philip Schlesinger, Graham Murdock and Philip Elliot (1983) have shown, most mass media, in adopting official perspectives towards terrorism, depoliticize and de-historicize the various movements they describe as being terroristic. Generally depicted as irrational and as picking out their victims at random, terrorists are feared by most members of the public - who come to see themselves as potential victims. This increases public support for harsh measures against suspected terrorists. Functioning as integration propagandists, most mainstream journalists generally tend to blur the differences between various groups, shifting attention from their social, economic, political and historical causes and concentrating instead on the means and immediate effects of their actions. They may also stress, especially in times of crisis, the need for greater powers for the state in order to ensure security. "The problem of security, as we know, haunts our society and long ago replaced the problem of liberty" (Baudrillard, 1990: 37).

It is not only the news or current affairs sections of the mass media where this form of integration propaganda is to be found, but in a wide range of formats. For example, a book reviewer for The Ottawa Citizen, who frequently wrote about publications on terrorism, concluded the following about an American publication that urged stricter state action against terrorists:
In their well-researched study, the authors argue that terrorism can be contained. They say governments must take positive steps, even if they restrict civil liberties a bit. It's time for action instead of rhetoric.  

The challenges of militants to the *status quo* are portrayed according to dominant scripts as national crises to be dealt with by the state, which then unleashes its own forms of direct violence and at times even suspends some basic freedoms. The same message is thus simultaneously given out by a variety of sources (the front page, the international page, the city page, the religion page, the business section, the book review section, the travel section) on the threat that political violence presents to civil society.

A popular rite of the dominant discourses on terrorism is the dramatic portrayal of security forces making preparations for a major national or international event. The comprehensiveness of the security net, the high-tech weaponry at the command of state personnel, and their ability to react to potential terrorist incidents are usually demonstrated to members of the mass media, who give high-profile coverage to these rituals (see Chaney, 1985). For example, in anticipation of the 1988 meeting of the Group of Seven leaders in Toronto, *The Financial Post* ("Canada's All-Business Newspaper") carried on the top of its front page a colour picture which depicted three heavily armed members of a "special tactical team" simulating the response to a crisis situation. The accompanying sidebar read:

A special tactical team of the metropolitan Toronto Police Force demonstrates its readiness to protect world leaders from terrorist
attacks at the Toronto Economic Summit June 19-21. The squad ... is part of a $6-million security effort planned for the summit. The special tactical team also includes members of the Ontario Provincial Police and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Armed with a range of automatic and semi-automatic weapons, the squad is trained in such skills as surrounding and storming buildings and scaling walls. [sic] and helicopter landings.

Having named the problem as "terrorism," the integration propagandist assigns responsibility to the combined tactical team constituting of members of the federal, provincial and municipal police forces to deal with it. S/he deftly manages in this journalistic ritual to tie together all five secondary technological myths (of the Nation, Work, Youth, Happiness, and the Hero): young, agile and potentially heroic employees of the state work to guarantee the security of seven powerful nations' leaders meeting to discuss the means to create global prosperity and happiness. Even if no terrorists were to show up, the propaganda victory in demonstrating the viability of the state in guarding the lives of democratically elected leaders had already been won through the coverage of the security ritual.

The Financial Post's prominent presentation of the anti-terrorist demonstration within the dominant script is particularly significant since, in reality, the planned display had in reality been curtailed. This had happened because the building in which other exercises were to be carried out were judged to be "unsafe" at the last moment. The embarrassing detail, however, did not appear in the Post's front page coverage. Only the specifics which fit into the framework of integrationist myths appear suitable for highlighting in "Canada's All-Business Newspaper." A fuller version of the story did appear in The Ottawa
Citizen, but was placed on page A24, carrying an apologetic quotation from a police spokesman who explained that "In all things, no matter how well you plan, not everything comes out necessarily right." Yet even this article did not question the viability of the tactical team that was supposed to be guarding "world leaders," after its failure to perform at a planned "rehearsal." Another revelation in this write-up was that the squad was not only trained in dealing with terrorists but also with "rowdy crowds" (of citizens). This detail would also have diminished the propagandic strength of the Post's front-page story which had clearly named the sole public problem to be dealt with as the darker threat of terrorism.

Another frequent media ritual consists of reporting favourably on "sting operations" in which terrorist suspects are arrested by law enforcement agencies, thereby symbolically asserting the legitimacy and efficiency of state agents' violence and de-emphasizing any impropriety on their part. In September 1987 The Ottawa Citizen, using various American news sources, printed several stories on the capture of a suspected Lebanese hijacker, Fawaz Yunis, by the US Federal Bureau of Investigation which had lured him into a trap with the pretence of conducting a drug deal. On September 18, the paper published an article from The Chicago Tribune stating:

Justice Department officials said Fawaz Yunis, 28, a Beirut resident, was arrested in international waters Sunday after he voluntarily boarded the vessel. (A6)

Here also, the secondary technological myths of Nation, Work, Youth, Happiness, and the Hero all interacted: heroic young state agents working to ensure the
security (and happiness) of the nation were able to snare an evil anti-hero through her/his own greed. The journalist seemed to be operating within the script of the confrontation between American law enforcers and "Islamic terrorists."

On the following day, the Citizen carried a piece from United Press International, which gave the first hint (appearing at the very end of the article) that the manner in which Yunis was captured was not viewed by everyone as legitimate:

In Beirut, Nabih Berri, chief of the Shiite Amal militia, accused the United States of "piracy against international law" and "aggression on Lebanon's dignity." (A18)

The headline of another write-up on September 25, also from UPI, stated with a note of alarm: "Hijack suspect's broken wrists may threaten FBI case." What had initially appeared as a heroic victory in the "war against terrorism" had soured because it seemed that the alleged terrorist's captors may have carried out the kind of practice that only the opponents of law and order are supposed to indulge in. Interestingly, this story appeared far from the front sections, on page D16. Once the facts began to differ from the preferred script the developments were no longer considered worth highlighting and the story was relegated to being a filler for a section containing classified advertisements. However, upon the conviction of Fawaz by an American court it returned to the first section of the Citizen, where a short article concluded: "The verdict was viewed as an affirmation of a 1984 law asserting U.S. jurisdiction over the taking of American hostages abroad" (15/3/89: A5). This mode of reporting also reaffirmed the consistency of the dominant script
that was followed faithfully in the newspaper's ongoing reporting of the story. The legitimacy of the superpower's actions in apprehending suspected criminals anywhere on the planet was underlined in the coverage of the international incident by the Canadian newspaper, which had relied on American news sources for the story.

**Constructing the (Violent) World Order**

The mass media also tend at times to adopt governmental definitions of terrorism for their own news analyses. An "end-of-decade" review of terrorism on December 30, 1989 by Henry Sporn, a staff writer for *The Ottawa Citizen*, stated:

In its 1987 report, the special Senate Committee on Terrorism and Public Safety repeated the adage that "One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter," and noted that "there is no consensus .. on a definition of typology [sic] of terrorism."

The committee did, however, come up with three useful categories of terrorism: state, state-sponsored and agitational, or group terrorism. (B6)

Although Sporn did cite France's "state terror" against the Greenpeace ship, the *Rainbow Warrior*, and the activities of "para-military death squads" in El Salvador, his article largely dwelt on the struggles of dominant states (especially the United States) against the political violence of non-governmental groups. It did not consider the support of powerful states for the "wholesale terrorism" perpetrated by various governments of National Security States against their own nationals (Chomsky and Herman, 1979). Also, while Henry Sporn warned that "narco-terrorism promises to be the one to watch in the early part of the nineties,"
he failed to explain the global infrastructural causes behind the economic incentives for many developing countries to produce "cash crops" that are much in demand in the North.

In another of the Citizen's end-of-decade reviews, the writer (Christina Spenser) lamented that while "Peace Breaks Out (between the two superpowers) ... Third World tensions threaten to boil over" (30/12/89: C3). Although she did state that "Global spending on weapons had passed $1-trillion-a-year mark" no mention was made about the promoters of this international trade, who were in large part the two superpowers themselves and the other three permanent members of the United Nation's Security Council; they together accounted for 74 per cent in global arms sales between 1982 and 1986 (Krause, 1989: 2). The role of the North in generating violence in much of the world through the structural dominance over the global economic system, through its sale of armaments to Southern countries and through covert operations (Marshall, Scott and Hunter, 1987; Woodward, 1987; Emerson, 1988) does not form part of international dominant discourses on violence and terrorism. An earlier feature article (6/2/88: E16), picked up from the Scripps Howard news service by the same newspaper, on the total number of people killed during wars in 1987 (of which all but one took place in the South), also did not touch on the sources of the weapons that the various warring parties employed. And when articles on the international arms race mention the destructiveness of wars in the developing world, it is usually blamed on the ("barbaric") combatants themselves.
The dramaturgy in which the Permanent Members of the Security Council act as guardians of the planet seems to be integral to dominant international discourses. These hegemonic states have come to be implicitly accepted by all others who subscribe to such discourses as those that have the right to own and deploy nuclear armaments and other weapons of mass destruction. An example of this global discourse was a story in The Ottawa Citizen reporting the alarm raised by a London newspaper about the spread of nuclear arms to countries which are "outside the scrutiny of the International Atomic Energy Agency" (IAEA), a United Nations body (5/11/88: A13). The function of IAEA's "safeguards inspection program" was described as "aimed at stopping the spread of nuclear arms from the five long-standing nuclear weapons states - the United States, the Soviet Union, China, Britain and France." No other reason was given by the news agency (Reuter) based in one of these five countries (Britain) explaining why they were allowed, above all others, to own nuclear weapons. The dominant journalistic model did not require the report to state other than that they were "long-standing nuclear weapons states." Since these hegemonic relationships have become normalized internationally, the report from the British wire service seemed coherent enough to print without explanation by the Canadian newspaper. The "natural" order of power relationships in the world is supported by international communications media based in militarily hegemonic countries as well as by their subservient customers in the North and the South. Global consensus on the current configurations of the international system is thus
maintained through the mass media as well as through the international agencies of coercion (the Security Council, IAEA), which themselves depend for their continued validation on this consensus.

Based on the myth of the Nation, dominant discourses are pivotal in the construction of symbolic international political structures, allowing those who control such discourses to sustain their power on the world stage. The self-contained and self-sustaining ambit of power does not allow international discourses on violence to focus on the fundamental issue of the existence of weapons of mass destruction. Instead, the possession of such arms by the "Big Five" becomes integral to the preservation of the global moral order (although the testing of these weapons has been criticized since the superpowers agreed to a test ban). The dramaturgy of armaments negotiations between the Washington and Moscow are presented in the mass media as occurring within a rational setting in which the actors operate in accordance with the norms of international diplomatic discourse. However, the conflict of the hegemonic states with ("barbaric") Southern ones who challenge the international status quo is presented as a struggle between the upholders of global order and those promoting chaos. Canadian media also regularly reproduce the discourse of another (Montreal-based) UN agency, the International Air Transport Agency (ICAO), that deals directly with the issue of air piracy. Operating within the myth of the Nation, ICAO, like other UN bodies, does not delve into the historical or political roots of various groups
that hijack airplanes: the problem is seen as being one of increasing security and penalties against criminal elements.\textsuperscript{19}

Despite various challenges, dominant international flows of information are carried out horizontally at three levels: between domestic elites, between major powers, and between transnational elites.

This somewhat global intra-elite communication and information flow tends to take a vertical and downward direction to the public. This is not to say, by any means, that there is no intra-elite competition, but simply to indicate that the growing conservative and system-maintenance orientation of these three levels of elite activities in international communication and international relations tend to generate a highly similar vertical line of messages, which seems to grow more in the direction of a global vertical line if we view the present international system as a whole. (Mowlana, 1986: 189)

Even with the growing democratization of communication between states and between individuals around the world due to the increasing use of computer networks, the power to create mass media messages largely remains with the elites. While alternative discourses do appear in a wide variety of small media, the ability to create public consensus is monopolized by the larger national and transnational networks. (However, in cases of extreme repression the credibility among audiences of these networks does suffer, as happened in Iran in the late 1970s.\textsuperscript{20})

In the mass media's dramaturgy of the struggle between the states protecting international security and those challenging the global status quo, the weaponry used by both is also attributed with good and evil characteristics. During the Cold War, Western reports would generally emphasize the origins of
the arms of unfriendly states or guerilla movements whenever they were "Soviet-
made," while those made in the US - the largest weapons exporter in the world -
were rarely described as such. In the course of the Gulf War fought between the
United Nations Coalition and Iraq, the "SCUD" missiles fired by Iraq against
Saudi Arabia and Israel were described as "terrorist weapons" because of their
inaccuracy and use against civilian centres. On the other hand, the American-
made Patriot missile which was used to shoot down SCUDs was described as a
"war hero." The much more massive damage done by "smart bombs" such as the
Cruise missiles fired by the American forces was underplayed: their accuracy in
pinpointing targets was celebrated, but the long-term structural violence effected
by destroying Iraq's economic infrastructure (which caused malnutrition, and in
many cases led to death) was rarely mentioned (Munk, 1991: 583-86). Adhering to
the dominant discourses on violence and terrorism, only the violence of the SCUD
was highlighted in a dramaturgy that anthropomorphized technology as "terrorists"
and "heroes."

"Good science" is often pitted against "evil science" in the discourses on
terrorism. In such dramaturgical scenarios, the state is shown as being compelled
to develop increasingly sophisticated technology to battle the nefarious
instruments of death and destruction that terrorists use, with heroic scientists in
the service of the "good state" engaging in cerebral struggle against "high-tech
terrorists." A feature article from the Los Angeles Times published in The
The Montreal Gazette, related how technology was being developed by the American government to make the world a safer place:

The challenge for these scientists of the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Aviation Security Branch is to find better, more efficient ways to protect more than 400 million passengers who board airliners in the United States each year from those who would kidnap, kill or maim them for politics or profit.\(^{23}\)

This focus on technology helps in framing the problem of terrorism as one of security, instead of looking for its root causes. The integration propagandist again skilfully utilizes all the secondary technological myths to impart the message that utopia will be ensured once the threat of terrorism is eliminated by the state. Myths of Work and the Hero operate within that of the Nation to depict dedicated employees of the state endeavouring "to foil hijackers and terrorists who would destroy a plane with weapons or explosives ..."; as do the dyadic myths of Happiness and Youth, which, respectively, suggest "a desire for security and comfort" (Szanto, 1978: 46), and great reward for risk (the millions of dollars spent by the US government).

Integration propagandists appear to do their job so well that significant proportions of the publics in Northern states seem to favour strong measures against terrorists that include increasing state powers to place suspects under surveillance and to hunt down and kill those who have escaped to other countries (DeBoer, 1979: 410-18). In late 1984 and early 1985, the Reagan administration in the United States attempted to organize a world-wide economic boycott of Libya due to its support of terrorist groups. Following wide support of this campaign in
the materials of the American news services used by Canadian mass media, a poll found 57 per cent of Canadian respondents in favour of these measures.24 In 1986, the American mass media accorded sympathetic coverage to a concerted campaign by the Reagan administration to implicate the Libyan government in a bombing in West Germany (Chomsky, 1987; Rainer Mathes and Reiner Auer, 1990). Although the US government claimed to have solid proof for its allegations, no evidence was made public - this seemed to go completely challenged by the mass media. However, the charges were successfully used by the Reagan administration to justify large scale bombing of Libya by American warplanes in April that year, for which a poll found 77 per cent approval among American respondents.25 Later revelations indicated that Libya was not involved in the West German bombing and that the US government had deliberately engaged in a campaign of "disinformation" against the North African country.26 At the same time, senior White House officials had been supplying arms to Iran, which the US State Department had also listed as a "terrorist state," and to the Nicaraguan Contras, contravening legislation passed by the US Congress.27 The demonization of Libya and its leader Muammar Qadhafi by the US mass media had served to deflect attention from the more serious terrorism that the Reagan administration was supporting elsewhere in the world. That Qadhafi's regime had supported terrorist activities internationally (apart from engaging domestically, like all other states, in structural and direct violence) had been evident for some time. However,
"The striking feature of Libyan atrocities," two commentators observe in reviewing the Amnesty International study of state terror, "is that they are the only ones whose numbers are sufficiently limited that the individual cases can be enumerated," in striking contrast to Argentina, Indonesia, and the Central American states where the emperor [the US government] molests the world. In short, Libya is indeed a terrorist state. But in the world of international terrorism, it is hardly even a bit player. (Chomsky, 1987: 116-17)

In Noam Chomsky's alternative discourse on terrorism, Libya's "retail terrorism" paled in comparison to the "wholesale terrorism" supported by the US. However, through the continual bombardment of media messages adhering to dominant international discourses consensus was built up among the publics of various states that this particular country was one of the worst exponents of terrorism.

The mass media clearly play an important role in the construction of agreement about violence and terrorism. While one cannot generalize about the ideological machinations of all mainstream journalists, the very nature of the mass media institutions leads to the continual production of hegemonic messages which veil the structural and direct violence of dominant states but highlight the violent activities of "terrorists" and "terrorist states." Operating within and contributing to these discourses, the mass media consciously or unconsciously use presentational formats, imagery, placements of information and selections of sources to further particular viewpoints. In naming only certain kinds of political violence as terrorism, in assigning causal and remedial responsibilities for this public problem, and in legitimating a depoliticized way of viewing it, the mass media are vital participants in engineering consensus about this issue. The sensationalistic
coverage of retail terrorism harnesses popular notions about the legitimacy and illegitimacy of certain kinds of violence. Journalistic narratives sketch heroes, villains and victims, according to their fit with the roles scripted by dominant fields of meanings. Domestic and international hierarchies are culturally constructed in the reporting of conflicts - "terrorists" and "terrorist states" are portrayed as international outlaws intent on creating worldwide mayhem, while powerful Northern states are generally presented as supplying, deploying and using weapons in the interests of peace, order and security, even if large numbers of the innocent are injured and killed by them. According to some observers, mainstream journalists in the North carry out discursive violence when they support or underplay the repression carried out by hegemonic powers. Writing about the relationship of international television news networks with Muslim societies, Akbar Ahmed refers to CNN and BBC as "storm troopers" (1992: 259).

Notes

1. A substantial body of literature exists on this subject. The analysis of the production and ideological rituals of newsmaking by Gaye Tuchman (1978) provides insight into the construction of reality according to imperatives that do not conform to the myth of journalistic objectivity. Warren Breed (1960) demonstrates how new journalists are socialized into institutional ways of thinking and operating. In his study of major American mass media organs, Herbert Gans (1980) indicates the kinds of indirect leverage the dominant classes have over mass media content through licensing, access to information, censorship and advertising. The collaborative work of Stuart Hall, Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson, John Clarke and Brian Roberts (1978), that looks at the social production of news about crime and violence, is especially useful in understanding the place of the mass media in the dominant discourses on violence as the authors painstakingly trace the links between official explanations and their adoption by journalists. Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky (1986) show how American newspapers participate in "manufacturing consent" about critical American foreign policy issues. They provide a propaganda model which seeks to explain the filtering processes that take place before information appears in the mass media. Daniel C. Hallin (1986) also presents substantial evidence to prove that the American media, contrary to popular belief, had a long-term legitimizing role regarding US military involvement in Vietnam.
2. For an extensive analysis of the role of the mass media acting as integration propagandists in the coverage of terrorism see Herman (1985: 139-99). While governments and the mass media are often at odds about the coverage of terrorists this usually involves disagreements over matters of style rather than ideology; the former fear that the mere portrayal of "terrorists" and interviews with them serve a legitimating function and the mass media are determined not to deprive themselves of covering some of the most dramatic events in current affairs. The two generally remain united on their view of terrorism as an illegitimate means of political struggle and work to present it as such to the public. For example, see the views of some prominent Western journalists in "Conference Report: Terrorism and the Media" (1985: 185-90).

3. Of the work that has been done on the coverage of terrorism in the mass media, the collaborative effort of Philip Schlesinger, Graham Murdock and Philip Elliot (1983) is among the most useful in comprehending the dominant discourses' determination of the manner in which the phenomenon is defined and portrayed in the mass media. However, the particular types of discourses discussed in this thesis are not conceptualized in the same manners as Philip Schlesinger et al's (1983) configuration of "official", "alternative", "populist", and "oppositional" perspectives. Firstly, "official" has been replaced by "dominant" (Williams, 1977: 108-10). According to Schlesinger et al, the "official perspective is the set of views, arguments, explanations and policy suggestions advanced by those who speak for the state" (2). Such a view espouses a monolithic approach to various types of discourses; in reality, there rarely is complete agreement on any issue in a particular sector of society (Collins, 1989), even government bureaucracies. Some "official" discourses, even when they appear in legislation, may not be hegemonic if the meanings they propose are actively resisted by important producers of dominant discourses such as the mass media. Secondly, the uses of "alternative" and "opposite" here are contrary to those of both Williams (113) and Schlesinger et al (16, 27); my use of "alternative" is similar to that of Herman and O'Sullivan (1991: 39). Alternative discourses are conceptualized here as those that do not subscribe to the same worldviews as dominant ones, and oppositional discourses as those operating within the broad philosophical frameworks of the societies in which the dominant discourses exercise their hegemony. Lastly, populist discourses are related to dominant ones in that they both share largely similar ideological viewpoints. However, as Schlesinger et al (24-27) describe them, populist discourses are expressed in blunt, outspoken manners and espouse extreme viewpoints: "such statements cannot be made by the spokesmen for a democratic order" who participate in dominant discourses. Dowling (1986: 12-24), which looks at the discourse of "terrorists," also aids in understanding the attempts of carrying out alternative political communication through violence. Both Brown (1987) and Williams (1990) seek to show that while terrorism succeeds in temporarily gaining the attention of mass audiences, it fails in influencing society about its larger aims. For illustrations of how various types of discourses interact with each other in constructing national in and out-groups, see Karim (1993a and 1993b).

4. Among the participants, Daniel Schorr and Bob Woodward tended to less consensual than others.

5. The linking of communist Eastern European governments with all forms of terrorism around the world was a popular theme among some Western commentators on the subject until the collapse of the Soviet bloc. This tendency is especially apparent in Sterling (1981). For a discussion on the subject see Herman and Brodhead (1986).

6. The second sentence in this quotation appears in the paper that was circulated at the international conference on Media and Crisis at Laval University in Quebec city in October 1990, but not in the published version (1992).

7. For an extensive listing of sources on this subject see Signorielli (1985).
8. Between 1981 and 1985, 16 people were killed and 44 were injured in "terrorist incidents" in the United States (Terrorist Research and Analytical Center, 1985: 11). These figures pale in comparison with the annual U.S. murder rate of one in 133. Quoted from "U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics Technical Report" (March 1987) NCJ-104274 in Gerbner (1992: 106).

9. Right-wing journalists tend to be more unabashed in promoting this view: for example, Jean-François Revel stated in an article called "The Terrorist Strategy" published in the British monthly Encounter, "The whole population is under permanent threat from international terrorism, which can strike how, when, and where it likes" (1986: 36).


11. For example, the Thatcher government in the UK prohibited the broadcast of interviews with Irish terrorists. The US Congress is considering a bill that would restrict constitutional liberties in the name of curbing terrorism (Cole, 1996: 11-15).


14. Also see Knight and Dean (1982: 144-161), for the Canadian press coverage of the recapture by British Special Forces of the Iranian embassy in London a group of Arab terrorists.

15. For British and Italian mass media's respective portrayals of superpower negotiations see Thompson (1987: 39-54) and Hallin and Mancini (1989).

16. Cf. von Riekhoff (1989). Inspections of the five big powers' immense stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction similar to those carried out by IAEA officials in Iraq following the Gulf War would be unthinkable.

17. Although Canadian media institutions do operate some foreign news bureaus, these are small and understaffed. Most Canadian media outlets depend overwhelmingly on American, British and French global news services for daily reports (Robinson, 1983). On the hegemony of the major wire services, see Mowlana (1986), MacBride et al (1980), Schiller (1971), and Smith (1980).

18. A frequent reason given for the lack credibility of the information on the Iran-Iraq war during the 1980s was the absence of "Western" reporters from the battle fronts, implying that the presence of Asian, African, Latin American and Eastern European correspondents would not have made any difference. Cf. The Christian Science Monitor, "Wave of executions worry Iran observers," Ottawa Citizen (17/9/88: A20).


21. With the thawing of the Cold War, the Western mass media rarely indicated that SCUDs were manufactured and supplied to Iraq by the Soviet Union.
22. Robert Mason Lee, "War hero: Patriot wins high praise as Scud buster," The Ottawa Citizen (23/1/91). While the sight of the relentless bombing of Iraqi targets by Western air forces was described by Cable News Network journalists as a display comparable to "Fourth of July" fireworks, the verb most consistently used in reference to the much fewer number of SCUD missiles that fell on Israel and Saudi Arabia was "rain." Cf. Associated Press, "Missiles rain on Israel, Saudi Arabia," The Montreal Gazette (26/1/91: A5).

23. Eric Malnic, Los Angeles Times, "U.S. is spending millions in hi-tech war on hijackers," The Montreal Gazette (16/5/87: B6). Ahmed Jibril was described as a "high-tech terrorist" by Emerson and Duffy (1990). This has also been a frequent theme in mass market technical magazines such as Popular Science which had a cover story in its November 1985 issue that asked, "Can Technology Stop Terror in the Air?"


Chapter 3

Muslim Discourses
Engaging the Technological Worldview

In order to understand the contemporary relationships between Northern and Muslim societies, it is necessary to review how Muslims have responded to technological discourses. Napoleon Bonaparte's invasion of Egypt in 1798 brought home to the Middle East the material advantages of the Cartesian approach to science that Europe had adopted. The technological developments that had led to European superiority in military and industrial production became much sought after by the political elites of Muslim societies in the Middle East and elsewhere, paving the way for the ever-increasing influence of Northern cultures over the latter. Although Muslim modernists of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries attempted to reconcile Cartesian science with the Koranic worldview, they were unable to develop a viable methodology which would allow for modernization within the framework of the Islamic ethos (Fakhry, 1983: 333-367). Immense personal and communal contradictions have resulted over the last two hundred years from the attempts of Muslims to adopt the essentially secularist technological discourse while ostensibly remaining faithful to the Koranic perspective. This has led to a growing reaction in some quarters, especially over the last two decades, against the technological worldview that is viewed as the cause of spiritual alienation and which, at the same time, has failed to improve the general quality of life in Muslim (and other developing) societies (Syed, 1987: 42).
During the Middle Ages, Muslims made significant scientific and cultural contributions to human civilization (Nasr, 1976; Schacht and Bosworth, 1979). Today, Muslim countries find themselves in a global system that is dominated politically and economically by the largely non-Muslim North. The end of colonialism has not brought about independence from the Northern-dominated infrastructures that control international trade and communication. The North primarily exerts influence over Muslim societies through ideological hegemony: the dominant discourses on development, which are extensions of the dominant political discourses of the North, are key determinants of the internal and external policies of Muslim and other Southern countries (Bin Sayeed, 1995; Abdel-Malek, 1988; Arkoun, 1982). The technological myths identified by Jacques Ellul, on which dominant discourses on development are based, play a critical role in shaping the paths taken by Muslim governments in modernizing their countries. Along with the rest of the world, Muslim societies are organized in accordance with the secondary technological myth of the Nation developed in Europe. The dominance of Muslim states by technocratic elites who have been influenced by Northern worldviews has led to the contemporary confrontations between them and the more traditional elements.

The civil war in Lebanon during the 1970s and 1980s illustrated in part the tensions between the technological and indigenous worldviews, tensions that in large part were the legacy the country's French colonial past. In order to maintain its influence upon withdrawal, France sponsored a "national covenant" in 1943
that assured that the presidency of the country would remain with the Roman Catholic Maronites, who had developed strong socio-cultural and economic ties with the colonial matriarch (Gilmour, 1983: 55-85; Rodinson, 1988). By the mid-1970s, the economic and social contradictions between various groups within the country led to conflict between the Lebanese Forces (the military arm of the Phalangists, the dominant Maronite group), and other militias (primarily the Shi'ite Amal and Hizbollah, the mostly Druze Progressive Socialist Party, and the Palestine Liberation Organization). At odds in Lebanon were (at least) two different concepts of community: the Northern technological myth of the Nation and the traditional Muslim notion of the world-wide community of believers, the *Ummah*.¹ The myth of the Nation is largely operative among the socio-economic Westernized elite - which includes Christians as well as Muslims. The organization of the Lebanese state according to European political and administrative norms has necessitated adherence to the myth of the Nation to a certain extent by all those who participate in it. While the ultimate aim of some Islamists is the eradication of all borders and the recreation of the global *Ummah*, they find themselves having in the meantime to operate within the temporal infrastructure of the nation-state.²

Militant Muslim groups in various countries often accuse governments of being neo-colonialist "lackeys of imperialism" (Sivan, 1990: 20) and tend to promote violent opposition against them. The ideologue of the Tanzim al-Jihad, a militant group in Egypt involved in the assassination of former president Anwar
Sadat, declared it a priority to fight the Egyptian government - which it viewed as furthering the interests of Northern imperialism - before endeavouring to liberate Jerusalem from Israeli control (Jansen, 1986: 192-93). The concept of *jihad* (literally meaning "exertion" or "struggle") is interpreted in different manners by various groups of Muslims. While the more well-known interpretation is that of "holy war," its broader sense of a personal spiritual struggle within oneself is emphasized by those Muslims who do not favour the militant stance. The struggle against European colonialism in Muslim lands was frequently framed as a *jihad*, and the Arab conflict against Israel has also been viewed by some in these terms (Peters, 1979). In Iran, the effort against the cultural and ideological influence of the West or "gharbzadgi" is viewed as a *jihad*. According to Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the late leader of revolutionary Iran:

> Islam is the religion of militant individuals who are committed to truth and justice. It is the religion of those who desire freedom and independence. It is the school of those who struggle against imperialism. But the servants of imperialism have presented Islam in a totally different light ... intended to deprive Islam of its vital revolutionary aspect ... ¹

The concept of *jihad* will be discussed more extensively in the next chapter.

This militancy is part of the general political resurgence among religious forces in Muslim societies (Esposito, 1993; Sivan, 1990). The current clash between elements of Northern and the Muslim societies, often termed "Islamic terrorism" in the international mass media, can be usefully analyzed by studying the reassertion of the Muslim worldviews² in the face of technological myths.
Such an analysis allows an understanding of the cultural bases of the resistance from some Muslim groups to the technological civilization's relentless efforts to extend its myths around the globe. Militant, orthodox as well as modernist and postmodernist Muslim interpretations of the primary technological myths of Science and History, and of the secondary ones of the Nation, Work, Happiness, Youth and the Hero will help in uncovering the cultural underpinnings of "Islamic terrorism."

**Science and History**

Before engaging in a discussion of the encounters between Muslim and Northern technological worldviews, it is necessary to go over some basic principles of Islam. Central to its creed is the concept of the absolute and indivisible unity (tawhid) of Divinity: the ideal of tawhid is frequently extended on the temporal scale to the unity of the Ummah (the Muslim community), to the human race, and to creation at large. Belief in the institution of prophethood and divine inspiration of prophets is another major feature of the religion. As in the biblical tradition, from which Islam emerged, the history of prophethood is interlinked with human history. While the Sunni branch, comprising between 75 and 80 percent of the Ummah, holds that divine guidance ended with the death of Muhammad in 632, the Shia branch (which is significant in Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, the Gulf states, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Pakistan and India, as well as in immigrant communities of eastern and southern Africa,
Europe, North America and Australia) believes that it continued in the designated successors among the Prophet's descendants, the Imams.

As in mainline sections of Judaism and Christianity, the dominant view of human history among Muslims is basically linear - beginning with Creation and ending in the Day of Judgement. The life of Muhammad is viewed as the period in which emerged the final divine guidance in the form of the Koran and the hadith (traditions of the Prophet). These scriptures are to direct Muslims in all aspects of life until Judgement Day. In the initial centuries following the death of the Prophet, there emerged several schools of religious law that varied somewhat among each other in the ways that they interpreted scripture. However, the very process of independent adaptive reasoning (ijtihad) which had allowed these schools of law to develop was discouraged upon their entrenchment in the Sunni branch. In Shi'ism, the power of amendment was the prerogative of the Imam, the lineal successor of Muhammad. At the extinction of the lineage of the Imams of what is now the largest section of Shia (the Twelvers), ijtihad is carried out by the religious leadership, the ulama (Rahman, 1968: 213). In practice, however, the strict hierarchical structure of the Shia ulama permits little independent reasoning on major issues.

According to Mohammed Arkoun, the first three centuries after Muhammad, the period in which the schools of law took shape, have been "transcendentalized" by the religious establishment (1994: 68-70; 1975: 19-45). The dominant legal-theological discourse in the Muslim world has centred on the
belief that Muslim law (*Shariah*) was sacralized and barred from further development by what is generally termed as the "closing of the gates of *ijtihad*." However, there have been many calls in the recent past to re-open the gates of *ijtihad* and allow contemporary jurists to engage in the updating of the *Shariah*.

Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1934), a major Muslim philosopher of this century, argued for the revitalization of the process of *ijtihad* as the only means by which Muslims could face the challenge of modernity and preserve their spiritual and cultural integrity. According to him, the Koran identifies two other sources of human knowledge (apart from direct spiritual experience): "Nature and History" (ibid: 127). While the technological myths of Science and History promise material progress, the Muslim myths of Nature/Science and History offer both material and spiritual advancement - for Islam is seen by its adherents as "a way of life" and science is viewed within an overall spiritual framework. Although the technological and the Islamic myths of Science have vastly differing epistemological bases, they broadly share in the belief that the progression of the scientific endeavour will eventually result in a utopic existence for their respective adherents. The technological myth of Science implies that the universe is discoverable and usable for the material benefit of humankind; its Muslim counterpart views as possible the attainment of both material and spiritual success through the understanding of God's Creation. However, while the technological myth holds that "all (of reality, of truth, of information, of objectivity) is present
now, and only remains to be uncovered" (Szanto, 1978: 40), the Islamic idea is "of continuous creation which means a growing universe" (Iqbal, 1934: 138).

But this latter view was eclipsed near the end of the formative centuries of Muslim philosophy. Critical thought became increasingly restricted as the rule of taqlid (adherence to the opinions laid down by forebears) gained ground. This served gradually to limit the vigorous independent legal-theological activity that had flourished in the initial period: even if the gates of ijtihad were not completely sealed, they could only be opened by the intellectual might of thinkers who were philosophical giants (Iqbal, 1934: 152). The concept of the fixedness of the Shariah became a dominant principle in Muslim societies, enhancing the position of the ulama who trained in and administered the law. It was the application of a particular (Aristotelian) science of logic for the interpretation of scripture and its codification into legal texts that had eventually resulted in the "transcendentalization" of Shariah.

Judicial practice based on pragmatic efforts to combine Qur'anic precepts with local custom gradually lost ground to the discipline of fiqh [jurisprudence]... the Sunni 'ulama [emerged] to claim discovery of a fixed and unchanging law from which honest dissent was not possible. Arkoun emphasizes Shafi'i [the founder of one school of law]'s role in sacralizing the sunna [the practice of the prophet Muhammad] and empowering the 'ulama to maintain the transcendental nature of the law in the name of science. (Lee, 1989: 5)

Staunch adherence to this sacralized law as formulated through the science of logic assured temporal and spiritual utopia, just as the technological myth of Science promises utopia in the material world through adherence to the modern
scientific method. Jacques Ellul describes the predominance of the role of technique over science as the ultimate consequence of the technological civilization: technique in the modern world has essentially become intellectually and spiritually independent of the human being - it is a sociological epiphenomenon that has abandoned the search for meaning and become an end in itself (1964: 306).

Similarly, Iqbal and Arkoun lament that ritual adherence to the Shariah has for many believers become the essence of "Islam." The early centuries of Muslim legal-theological activity resulted in the production of definitions and codes that came to form the creed of Sunnism. Once established, the Shariah came to be seen as a reflection of the essential axioms of the revelation received by Muhammad rather than an interpretive adaptation of them:

The search for meaning became identified with the application of logic to text; done right, it is done forever. Only the result need be repeated. Repetition becomes equated with truth. (Lee, 1989: 6)

Iqbal appealed for a reassessment of history in making a case for revitalizing the process of theological reasoning in the modern age. He viewed "the concept of life as a continuous movement in time" - an ongoing evolution of human society and of Creation - as a key feature of the Koranic concept of history (1934: 141). The Islamic myth of History seems to be similar to its technological counterpart in so far as they both uphold the ever-changing nature of society. Like Iqbal, Mohammed Arkoun seeks to underline the historicity of the development of Shariah. He says that in placing the formulation of the Muslim creed into the
transcendental realm, consideration of this historical process has become an "unthought of Islamic thought" (1975: 88-89); bodies of religious law have thus become ossified into a corpus of self-evident truths immutable to change.

Not only the *Shariah* but also the historical period in which it was formulated has become sacralized; hence we have "Islamic history." The processes of cultural construction that led to the development of institutional structures have become invisible: following centuries of adherence, the approved sets of legal-theological corpuses have come to be inseparably linked in dominant Muslim discourses to scriptures (the Koran and the traditions of the Prophet), rather than being seen as interpretations of them. Considering the numerous interpretations of Islamic scripture and the absence of a universally recognized religious authority, each Muslim group, in so far as it adheres to a particular school of law, can claim that its actions follow scriptural dictates.

Iqbal and Arkoun (among many other 20th century contemporaries12), promoting a revival of the interpretation of scripture in the light of current conditions, have encouraged the rereading of Muslim history in order to place the formation of the *Shariah* into its socio-political context. However, such thinkers who contemplate the use of *ijtihad* in the present are vehemently opposed by a variety of groups and individuals who would hold even more rigidly to traditional interpretations. The latter are known variously as "traditionalists," "Islamists," "fundamentalists," "revivalists," or "integrists," appellations that draw attention to their insistence on the instatement in modern Muslim states of religious law as
formulated in the initial centuries after Muhammad. Even before the current wave of religious militancy, the minimal demand of the non-militant traditionalist ulama establishment was for the basing of constitutional, civil and criminal legislation on the Shariah: in 1971, Sheikh Ali Sayyid Mansur of the Religious Institute of Asyut in Egypt wrote to a national commission on the country's constitution:

The great masses of the Muslim ulama insist that there should be a clause in the constitution that Islam is the state religion, that the Islamic sharia should be the source of our fundamental laws ... 13

The resurgence of religious militancy has led to much bolder demands and attempts to institute "Islamic" regimes by force. Although they remain minorities, militant groups have gained substantial followings in various Muslim countries from Algeria to Tajikistan to Indonesia (Esposito, 1993). Even where they do not actually hold the reins of power they have emerged as official and unofficial opposition forces which governments in Muslim countries cannot afford to ignore. Some Muslim leaders have countered by adopting the symbols and rhetoric if not parts of the political programs of the Islamists (Dessouki, 1982; Karim, 1984). 14

Like the modernists, the militants also ask their co-religionists to appreciate the Muslim past - but their historical understanding generally disregards the socio-political and intellectual conflicts that occurred in the formulation of the Shariah and tends to view the latter as coming directly from the Koran and the Prophet. Their comprehension of the contemporary world has also lacked sophistication. Ali Hillal Dessouki remarks:
Their views tend to be simple and dichotomous and do not reflect a grasp of the complexities of modern society. One example is the view of international relations as a constant struggle between Islam and its enemies. The list of enemies includes almost everybody: the crusading Christian West, the atheist communists, and the Jews. A recurrent theme in their writings is the conspiracy against Islam. This feeling is likely a function of weakness, isolation, and a recognition of the gap between their ideas and actual developments in their societies. The simplicity of their thought is partially derived from their cultural classicism, that is, their belief in the early period of Islam, the era of the Prophet and the rightly guided caliphs, as an image of what Muslim society should be. In particular, they fail to distinguish between aspects of that society that have universal - at least for Muslims - relevance (norms and values), and those that were historically specific (particular social or institutional arrangements). To that extent, their thought has a utopian component, a yearning for a perfect past that must be captured and revived. (1982: 19; cf. Mernissi, 1992: 42-59)

The period for independent scientific/theological reasoning seems long ended for them. Paradise can be attained by staunch adherence to the scientifically formulated religious law by the masters of yore; in this worldview the only significant historical event remaining is the Day of Judgement. Islamists (as well as others who adhere to conservative viewpoints) insist on ritual conformity to the *Shariah*, which theoretically prescribes correct behaviour for many aspects of everyday living. Adherence to technique, as in technological society, tends to become the end in this religious science.

Iqbal and Arkoun urge the demystification of Muslim history and the recognition of the ever-changing circumstances which have to be addressed by a continually evolving response based on the fundamental values of Islam. Iqbal offers a general approach which would involve a dialectic of the operation of
"practical reason" and the realization of the two "basic ideas regarding the nature of life and time," namely, the unity of human origin and "the concept of life as a continuous movement in time" (1934: 140-41). Arkoun encourages the setting up of the "methods and rules of comprehensive, explicative, deconstructive historical study ..." (1982: 51). He suggests that the tools of modern social sciences and philosophy can be used in an interdisciplinary fashion to better understand Muslim pasts, presents and futures in their diversity within the concept of the essential unity of the overall Muslim experience (1988b: 420-21). Like Szanto, who favours the dialectical interaction of the Western technological myths of Science and History to obtain "the growth of scientific knowledge and human progress through the constant reconceptualization of a reality which improves ... with the passing of time" (1978: 54), Arkoun "says the task of social science is to 'articulate the multiplicity of human discourse by means of the constantly revised principles and methods of objective knowledge ...'" (Lee, 1989: 17). While informed by different philosophical perspectives, both appear to concur in the belief that only when scientific endeavour is continually re-evaluated on the basis of evolving historical circumstances can it elicit an authentic understanding of the human condition.

Secondary Technological Myths

The operation of Ellul's secondary myths in the modern Muslim countries, as in their Northern counterparts, centres around the myth of the Nation. Ruling
elites attempt to create consensus out of a variety of group experiences and histories. Alternative readings of the past are penalized and the religious establishment is co-opted into discourses of development by the encouragement of those religious expressions that seem convergent with modernity (Arkoun: 1988). However, this latter attempt which has revolved around proving the capability of "Islam" to contribute to modernity, has generally not involved an extension of reason to a reinterpretation of scripture. The state has supported and encouraged the superfluous casting of nationalist ideologies in "Islamic" garb by the ulama and other propagandists subscribing to the same dominant discourses (Qureshi, 1980).

Even though the Muslim world has not been politically united since the death of the Prophet, the modern myth of the Nation - introduced by European colonialism - finds a strong rival in the Muslim concept of a united community. Pan-Islamism, an idea that sought the greater political unity of the Muslim Ummah, emerged in the late 19th century, and the notion of a united "Arab nation" has been a popular ideal in this century (Hourani, 1991: 315-433). However, despite various attempts at the unification of Muslim and Arab countries, pan-Islamism and pan-Arabism remain unattained ideals. Governing elites in independent Muslim and Arab nation-states have been unable to relinquish a significant degree of power to an overarching Muslim or Arab political superstructure. Iqbal was a supporter of pan-Islamism, but could not ignore the fact that nationalism had been embraced by the political elites of
Muslim lands (Mujahid, 1985: 32-34). In reluctantly agreeing to the concept of the nation as a means for the political organization of Muslim societies he did not see the nation-state as restricting the "the social horizon of its members":

For the present every Muslim nation must sink into her deeper self, temporarily focus on herself alone, until all are strong and powerful to form a living family of republics. A true and living unity, according to the nationalist thinkers, is not so easy as to be achieved by a merely symbolical overlordship. It is truly manifested in a multiplicity of free independent units whose racial rivalries are adjusted and harmonized by the unifying bond of a common spiritual aspiration. It seems to me that God is slowly bringing home to us the truth that Islam is neither Nationalism nor Imperialism but a league of Nations which recognizes artificial boundaries and racial distinctions for facility of reference only, and not for restricting the social horizon of its members. (1934: 159)

However, the technological myth of the Nation has triumphed over attempts to create a more integrated Arab or Muslim polity. The bitter war in 1971 between East Pakistan and the military regime in Karachi, leading to the separate country of Bangladesh, underlined the difficulty of reconciling Muslims separated by ethnicity, physical distance and political vision under the banner of faith. Despite the establishment of the Organization of Islamic Conference, a grouping that includes states with Muslim majorities, and the Arab League, no agreement has emerged on creating a more integrated Muslim *Ummah* or Arab nation. These organizations have also failed in resolving major disputes between Muslim countries and between Arab ones such as those between Iraq and Iran and between Iraq and Kuwait, both of which led to full-scale wars.
Muslim states, like most other countries of the world, have linguistic, ethnic, cultural and religious minorities. The structure of the modern nation-state, notwithstanding the institution of democracy or international human rights conventions, places power in the hands of certain social groups that are usually in the numerical majority. Political elites, usually drawn from these dominant groups, generally accord them explicit or implicit privileges while disregarding the needs of subordinate groups. At the extreme, the latter are systematically persecuted or even attacked militarily. The respective situations of Kurds in Turkey, Iraq and Iran, Berbers in the Maghreb, Shia groups in Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, Palestinians in Kuwait, Jews in Syria, Copts in Egypt, Ahmadis in Pakistan, and Bahais in Iran are some of the examples of these tendencies.

Those who seek a reunited Muslim *Ummah* find the militants' messages appealing. Various Islamist movements offer close socio-political relations between all the Muslims of the globe (cf. Siddiqui, 1986). Although the "Islamic" alternatives to the system of nation states remain poorly defined, the mere promise of a re-united Muslim world poses a major challenge to the adherents of the technological myth of the Nation in Muslim societies. The "Muslim nation" is the *Ummah*, according to those who uphold the essential socio-political unity of all the followers of Islam. Such a view is in direct opposition to the discourses of development which frames progress and all socio-political relationships within the national borders established by colonial powers. Apart from the revolutionary government of Iran (which, for all practical purposes, also continues to operate
domestically and internationally as a nation-state), various movements in
countries such as Egypt, Algeria and Afghanistan have openly vowed to
overthrow existing Muslim nation-states by use of force (Esposito, 1993).
Described as "Islamic terrorists" in dominant international discourses, they justify
their actions by generally rejecting the legitimacy of incumbent political systems
and regimes, and seek to establish the *Shariah* as the law of the land.

Rejecting the arguments of the militants, Arkoun (1982) provides a
framework for the establishment of a socio-political space that would allow for
the creation of a just Muslim society which would not necessarily be confined to
national borders but would also not eradicate them. This would require a two-
pronged approach: on the one hand, using the tools of modern science for
rediscovering Islam's origins and essential principles in order to strive towards an
authentic alternative to the North's "divided and conflictual" definitions of human
communities and, on the other, carrying out a critical reassessment of Muslim
orthodoxy's yearning for the re-establishment of the Muslim golden age.
Therefore, both, the dominant discourses of the technological as well as that of the
Muslim societies, would be critically re-evaluated within such a strategy.

A primary condition that Arkoun suggests in constructing a modern and
authentic community within a particular region (northern Africa, the *Maghreb*, in
the following case) would involve a non-hierarchical rewriting of history:

The methods and rules of comprehensive, explicative,
deconstructive historical study need to be set up. Such study will
be prohibited from speaking about the heresy or apostasy of a
group; it will first deconstruct the religious universe of actors, the symbolic issues of their struggle by comparison and not by opposition with those of a dominant group. Nor will such study systematically eulogize the ruling group of the State; the sociopolitical universe of the dominated groups will be presented from the point of view of social and political anthropology, not from the definitions given by the victorious group. (Arkoun, 1982: 51)

In such a scheme, the myth of the Nation - or more precisely, that of the Community - would allow the appreciation of the multi-dimensional nature of society: its histories, its cultures and its worldviews (cf. Bhabha, 1994). (Fatima Mernissi has proposed how the participation of women in the genuine development of Muslim societies can be enhanced.\textsuperscript{18}) Integration propagandists of the hegemonic groups would not foist the dominant version of primary and secondary myths on the diverse population under such a regime. The primary technological myths of History and Science would act in a dialectical fashion to produce an integrated community existing within a particular cultural and geographical locus. No one discourse would be dominant.

Arkoun criticizes the operation of the Western "ideology of development" in the dominant political discourses of Muslim states for producing an alien socio-cultural environment (1982: 51). Whereas virtues such as sobriety and frugality and networks of social relationships had been the defences that enabled inhabitants to survive for centuries in harsh physical environments, the modernist principle of "compensation through consumption" has led to the creation of consumer societies on the models of the Western technological state (ibid: 36).
The migration of uprooted populations to the larger cities due to the disruption through industrialization of the old social patterns has rearranged economic relationships in most Muslim lands. Arkoun contends that neither capitalist nor Marxist modes of analysis can fully explain this situation, especially in the rural areas:

... the categories defined by Marx do not work in each group, tribe, or region. More than property and work criteria, we must consider the structures of the relationships, the descents, and the alliance and expansion strategies. We know of the existence of mulk (private) property and 'arsh (communal) property, which implied different relations with the land, the time of work, the social and economic environment. The colonial intervention shook the bases of nomadic existence and of rural life; the new States and the impact of the modern economy provoked the brutal liquidation of a way of life called "archaic." (Ibid: 39-40)

The governments of modern Muslim states seem intent on adhering closely to dominant discourses on development and reshaping the ways that the citizen views the world by "destroying in his mind all the archaic structures of thinking, acting, and seeing work" (ibid: 40). In this process, they seem to be completely ignoring the historical experience of the land and its people, instead emphasizing the rationalistic, scientific worldview which is the hallmark of the dominant technological myth of Work. This has led to alienation among Muslim populations and an increasing demand for a return to traditional approaches to life: a primary expression of such demands is a closer adherence to "Islam" as interpreted in dominant Muslim discourses.
The irony in many developing countries is that subservience to the technological myth of Work has failed to provide gainful employment for many of the educated youth. Having destroyed the bases of the traditional economies, the ideologies of development have not been able to replace the lost opportunities. Islamist movements promise an "Islamic" utopia in which there will be ample employment opportunities - something that secular governments have failed to provide. Massive corruption has fuelled the desire for ethical work environments, which are also envisioned in a resurgent "Islamic society." Nazih Ayubi puts forward a scenario in which many young educated Muslims, brought up with traditional Muslim values and then transplanted into the city, are tempted to join militant organizations:

Just imagine a recent immigrant from a village or a small town who has to cope with the dismal problems of a city like Cairo (the crowding, the noise, the crumbling, decayed and moribund infrastructure etc.) and who would on top of that all suspect that, under all kinds of pressure, his father might not be so correct (financially) and his sister might not be so correct (sexually); is not this the kind of situation that would lead people to search for a simple, strong, clear-cut formula that would answer their many disturbing questions and provide them with certainty and assurance? (1980: 495)

The totalizing nature of the Islamist message thus becomes attractive in the face of the harsh realities of a poverty-stricken life.

Within the perspectives offered to Muslim populations by dominant discourses on development, the myths of happiness and youth intertwine as they do in the technological West. A primary vehicle for the interaction of these dyadic
myths is the public image of conspicuous consumption: television advertisements, mimicking the West, use young women and men as models to promise material comfort and satisfaction of consumerist desires. The ability of acquiring the means to fulfil these "needs," however, is by acquiescing to the state, which is a key determinant of access to education and to employment. Rewards are to be gained primarily by adhering to officially-sanctioned norms. The state controls to a great extent the kind of subjects that will be studied, and the intellectual curiosity of university students is channelled into approved subjects for inquiry: "many doctoral students choose 'national' topics because they are more certain to find a job ..." (Arkoun, 1982: 52). The search for material happiness and security appears to have overcome the urge for adventure and discovery: in the official domain, the passiveness of the myth of Happiness has subsumed the dynamism of the myth of Youth.

In the often dogged and ruthless endeavour to modernize, the nominal freedoms allowed by the liberal Western state are often suppressed in Muslim as well as non-Muslim developing countries. This does not even permit the operation of the dialectic between the two coaxial myths of Youth and Happiness to produce a public consensus about the legitimacy of the power elite to rule, a key element in the political balancing acts carried out in Northern states. Instead, the promise of "exploration and discovery, potential, the future, risk for great reward" (Szanto, 1978:46) that the technological myth of Youth is supposed to provide is to be found in the Islamist vision of "Islam." The reward for risk and potential for
happiness that religious militancy offers is the institution of the "Islamic" utopia or, in the event of death, eternal paradise. Many of the urban Muslim youth, frustrated with the hopelessness of near-destitute lives and the denial of free expression by governments as well as the suppression of official Muslim establishments by the state, tend to turn to militant groups. (It is significant that many of those who have joined Islamist groups had studied the sciences at post-secondary institutions.20) Like the integration propagandist of the technological state, the militant preacher also creates the illusion of the individual's escape from technological alienation and political control. And as with the offer of ultimate meaning held out by the technological state's propagandist (Ellul, 1964: 302-3), his too is a mirage - for the creeds to which dominant legal-theological Muslim discourses demand adherence prohibit independent thought.

In an essay on "The Person" (1994), Arkoun delves into the traditional and current notions of the ideal "Islamic" personality. The Muslim myth of the Hero is closely related to the notion of the "Perfect Person" (al-Insan al-Kamal), who is conceptualized as the ideal embodiment of the virtues of "Islam." Prophet Muhammad is viewed as the primary example of the good Muslim and his practice (sunna) serves as a guide to correct "Islamic" behaviour. His companions and, among the Shia, his successors - the Imams - also reflect exemplary etiquette. Contemporary Muslim leaders are generally cast in these moulds in order to enhance their acceptability to the masses. State propagandists in various Arab countries strive to build a national personality "by using the systematic
appropriation of well-known figures who belong, in fact, to a transsocial Arabo-Islamic unity and [are] exterior to the nationality idea" (Arkoun, 1982: 52). The technological myth of the Nation is also used to construct the heroic national leader as a knight who leads the country to independence from the colonialists. In the face of the failure of these national leaders and the repression of the aspirations of society by the authoritarian state, there arise the militant counter-leaders often perceived by their followers as reflecting authentic "Islamic" values. Although these movements scarcely receive broad public support, their discourse expresses quite appropriately the disappointed expectations, the sentiments of frustration, oppression, and anguish, and the need for hope among the generation born after 1950. These young people were born and have grown up in an atmosphere dominated by wars of liberation and the euphoric phase of national rebirth; subsequently they have experienced the enormous disappointments of defeat [by Israel] in 1967, the retreat of the great Arab nation exalted by [former Egyptian president] Nasser, the destruction of liberties, the negation of human rights, imperialist appetites, disorderly development, the ineffectiveness and often the destructiveness of traditional values, unemployment, urban congestion, unequal distribution of resources, waste, and corruption. (Arkoun, 1994: 91)

The militant counter-leaders, appropriating the ideal symbolic images and rhetoric transmitted by traditional Muslim discourses, offer the reassertion of "Islamic" values over a secularist and, what is often portrayed by them, irreligious and "anti-Islamic" national regimes.

The just rebellion against oppression has an honoured tradition in Muslim history and is very much part of the socio-political discourses of Muslims, not only of the Shia but also the Khariji branch (Mernissi, 1992: 27-30), both of
which for the most part were minority creeds. A key feature of the Muslim
dramaturgy of opposition to the unjust state is the victimage of the counter-
leader/hero. Credentials for the latter status are often gained through suffering at
the hands of an oppressive government, as in the case of Ayatollah Khomeini,
who was jailed and exiled by the former Shah of Iran. The archetype of the
victim/hero in Muslim history is the figure of Husayn, a grandson of the Prophet
and Imam of the Shia, who was killed in combat against the overwhelming forces
of the Umayyad caliph in 683. This struggle is the subject of annual re-enactment
in passion plays by the Twelver Shia. As in certain branches of Christianity, some
Muslim viewpoints give martyrdom/victimage high value in the symbolic battle
against the forces of evil. Like the anti-hero in modern Western literature (Szanto,
1978: 52), the contemporary Muslim counter-leader symbolizes the struggle
against the nationalist hero of the myth of Science. But unlike the individualist
Western anti-hero, the militant Muslim counter-leader represents not a singular
knight in shinning armour who would change the course of history, but someone
whose particular individuality is veiled by the mantle of tradition:

Thousands of mosques sermons, public harangues, articles,
conferences, and published works carry and distribute broadly the
same emotional charge using the same citations and the same
vocabulary, and their effectiveness is all the greater because they
are constantly reutilized in ritual fashion. Like a swollen river
picking up a wild assortment of things in its path, the rich Islamic
tradition of protest in the name of the absolute Truth revealed by
God is called upon to play the same revolutionary role as in its first
manifestation in Mecca and Medina. (Arkoun, 1994: 98)
This anonymity is key to understanding the self-sacrifice of the faceless car or truck bomber, whose personal insignificance in relation to the "river of Islamic tradition" inspires the sacrificial self-annihilation in the name of the greater, timeless cause.

The Muslim anti-hero is culturally constructed using the traditional symbols of protest which have become validated as "Islamic" in the dominant discourses of Muslim orthodoxy. Figures from the past, canonized by the dominant tradition, have provided the cognitive models on which the "Islamic" struggle against oppression is based. Arkoun is critical of this tendency in so far as it forces current protest to be pigeonholed unreflectively into the moulds within which the contemporary "Muslim' person takes shape and asserts itself" (1994: 99). Therefore, even as the militant movement seeks to break the shackles of nationalist tyranny, it imprisons itself within the dogmas of dominant legal-theological discourses. It is not the myth of History, but that of Science that is operative here. In accordance with the latter myth, which sees the institutions of "Islam" as having achieved perfection, the same symbols, rhetoric and images from the past are used to promote the Muslim anti-hero.

... Islamic thought must get out of its dogmatic closure to benefit from the tools and questioning of the social sciences ... (Ibid: 101) It is possible, step by step, to reconstruct all the socio-cultural mechanisms on which the social order and the "legitimacy" of the political order are based and which, in turn, firmly condition the status and development of the person. (102-103)
While he states that rationalistic scientific thought tends to reduce the lofty spiritual stature of the human being posited by religion, Arkoun firmly holds to the belief that using social scientific methodology to analyze their tradition (through a dialectical interaction of the myths of Science and History) will enable contemporary Muslims to attain the authentic and genuinely integrated *Insan al-Kamil* (Perfect Person).

The myths of technological society have had a tremendous influence on Muslim societies. There are some basic similarities between the dominant technological and Muslim discourses in so far as they both adhere to a primacy of the myth of Science over that of History. The place of technique appears to be pre-eminent in the two views of Science. While the religious militants have emerged largely in response to the hegemony of the Northern technological civilization over Muslim societies, they ironically have a lot in common with the nationalists in their similar adherence to the myth of Science. Their respective discourses on the organization of society (both of which have their roots in Aristotelian conceptions of science) hold that "the absolute in human improvement can be achieved, the utopia can be built" (Szanto, 1978: 40): the nationalists see the nation-state as the ideal territorial locus within which to attain utopia and the religious militants insist that adherence to the *Shariah* will lead to utopia in the form of a united Muslim *Ummah*. The likes of Iqbal and Arkoun, on the other hand, urge historical reassessments of the views of the nationalists and the
militants, promoting authentically indigenous responses to the technological worldview through an ongoing dialectic of Science and History.

Notes

1. In the late 19th century there had also emerged the concept of *watan* as "national homeland." S.A. Arjomand (1984).


3. For a variety of interpretations of the concept see Williams (1971: 255-306).


5. Apart from adherence to certain basic aspects of the religion, there exists certain diversities in belief and practice in the global Muslim community comprising of around one billion members. "There is a danger of conveying the impression that there is a unity in Muslim perception and a totality in Muslim endeavour; that is manifestly not so. Bengalis, for instance, viewed the Pakistan army as a violent instrument of oppression; many Afghans accused the *jihad* of their compatriots of being funded and organized by the American CIA; many in Ayatollah Khomeini's Iran, including the Ayatollah himself, criticized General Zia's Islamization efforts in Pakistan as inadequate; in turn, many Muslims in the Middle East and South Asia condemned the Ayatollah's revolution in Iran as excessive. Critics were quick to point out the connection between military regimes and the use of Islam: to them Islam in Numeiri's Sudan and Zia's Pakistan was reduced to the chopping off of hands and whipping of petty criminals. Some scholars were cynical of colleagues who attempted to 'Islamize' knowledge, since merely appending the label 'Islamic' was no guarantee of academic quality. Sectarian champions, Shia or Sunni, denounced their rivals and proclaimed their exclusive ownership of the truth; smaller groups, like the Ismaili, Ahmadi and Baha'i, were dismissed as heretics and sometimes physically persecuted. (1992: 36-37).

6. My positioning of postmodernism among Muslims differs somewhat from that of Akbar Ahmed. According to him, "If modern meant the pursuit of Western education, technology and industrialization in the first flush of the post-colonial period, postmodern would mean a reversion to traditional Muslim values and a rejection of modernism" (1992: 32). I have chosen to use "Islamism" or "Muslim militancy" to refer to the vehement rejection of modernity by some Muslims and their desire to return to a vaguely articulated historical "Islam," while reserving the term "postmodernist" in the tendencies among Muslims, including Ahmed himself along with others such as Arkoun, of applying postmodernist approaches developed in the North to Muslim contexts.

7. Whereas the responses of Muslim discourses to the technological myths identified by Jacques Ellul can conceivably be discussed using the writings of a number of scholars, those of Mohammed Arkoun and Allama Muhammad Iqbal were chosen here for their particular relevance to the issues under consideration.

8. Although no formal statement seems to exist declaring this closure, "existing jurisprudence became ossified and dogmatic under the prevalence of *taqlid* or passive conformity" (Sajoo, 1990: 32).
9. The Islamic myth of Science as opposed to the Northern technological myth of Science is imbedded in a spiritual interpretation of nature and of the acquisition of knowledge. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, a historian of science, writes: "... Islamic Science did not bring into being a secular science independent of a spiritual vision of the Universe. It carefully guarded the proportions between things, giving the spiritual and material their proper due and always preserving in mind the hierarchy of being and knowledge, whereby the integration of the sciences of nature into a wisdom transcending all discursive thought was maintained" Nasr (1977: 160).

10. For comprehensive accounts of this period of Muslim history see Watt (1973) and Fakhry (1983).


14. Even though they are opposed to each other on various points, the Islamists, the traditionalist ulama and state propagandists subscribe to most of the main elements of dominant Muslim discourses.

15. As Khalid Bin Sayyid has shown, however, some Islamists have attempted to interpret Islamic values to make them relevant to contemporary society (1995: 87-90).

16. For a discussion on Iqbal's dialectical thought, see Fayyaz (1987: 12-22).

17. "The link that Islam has created, since its origin, between religion (or the spiritual world), the State (or temporal powers) and the profane world (din/dawla/dunya), necessitates a reconsideration of the theoretical legitimacy and the practical possibility of the Occidental model of the separation between the spiritual and the temporal" Arkoun (1982: 53).


19. Also see Rodinson (1978) and Turner (1974).

Chapter 4

Debates about Jihad
Competing Meanings

This chapter peruses cultural constructions of religious war in Northern and Muslim discourses. Translated as "holy war" in dominant Northern discourses, jihad is frequently viewed as the ultimate expression of the Muslim's violent tendencies and as being synonymous with "Islamic terrorism." Seen from the perspective of the Christian disdain of worldly matters, jihad seems to be a perversion of religion even though "holy war" is not a concept that is completely alien to Christian thought (see Vaux, 1992; Armstrong, 1988; Hermann 1989). Whereas "holy war" does not occupy the level of prominence in Christianity that it does in Muslim doctrine, the Crusades and other wars carried out in the name of Christianity have been fairly bloody (Setton, 1969-77). Nevertheless there has developed a Western Christian self-perception of being essentially restrained and non-violent in juxtaposition to the image of Muslims driven to killing by fanatical frenzy.

In its dominant meanings, "holy war" is thought of as a means to weaken or destroy another religion and to acquire converts. Medieval Arabs are often portrayed in Northern discourses as attacking neighbouring lands carrying a sword in one hand and the Koran in another. Such views hold that conquered peoples were forced to embrace "Islam" upon pain of death even though "conversion by force, while not unknown in Muslim countries, was, in fact, rare" (Lapidus, 1988: 244). Rudolph Peters (1976, 1977, 1979) who has extensively studied medieval and modern Muslim discourses on jihad, remarks:
The image of the dreadful Turk, clad in a long robe and brandishing his scimitar, ready to slaughter any infidel that might come his way and would refuse to be converted to the religion of Mahomet, has been a stereotype in Western literature for a long time. Nowadays this image has been replaced by that of the Arab "terrorist" in battledress, armed with a Kalashnikov gun and prepared to murder in cold blood innocent Jewish and Christian women and children. The assumption underlying these stereotypes is that Moslems, often loosely called Arabs, are innately bloodthirsty and inimical towards persons of a different persuasion, and that owing to their religion, which allegedly preaches intolerance, fanaticism and continuous warfare against unbelievers [sic]. This view of Islam and Moslems, which developed in the Middle Ages, acquired new life and vigour in the era of European imperialism. Moslems were depicted as backward, fanatic and bellicose, in order to justify colonial expansion with the argument that it served the spread of civilization, which the French called mission civilisatrice. At the same time, this offered a convenient pretext for the use of force against the indigenous population, for behind the outward appearance of submissiveness of the colonized Moslems, the colonizers saw the continuous danger of rebelliousness lurking, nourished by the idea of jihad and waiting for an opportunity to manifest itself. (1979: 4-5)

The dominant image of the jihad-inspired Muslim ready to pounce upon Christians could thus justify massive structural and direct violence against Muslim interests during the colonial era. This tendency has survived into the present, helping to legitimize highly destructive actions such as the intensive bombing by Western powers of Iraqi cities during the Gulf War, the Serbian assault on Bosnian Muslims, and the Russian slaughter of Chechens.

Applying contemporary standards to the concept of jihad, which was formulated during medieval times, Northern critics have found in it evidence that Muslims are barbarians (see Laffin, 1988). Such approaches disregard the complexity of the concept as well as the debates that Muslims have engaged on it
over the last fourteen centuries. The contemporary expressions of these debates are carried out mainly between modernist and Islamist Muslims. *Jihad* in the discourses of the former is presented as an essentially defensive mode of war - it is carried out only when the existence of the faith is in danger (cf. Williams, 1971: 301-302; Peters, 1979: 121-35). They emphasize those parts of the Koran and the traditions of the prophet Muhammad (*hadith*) which counsel peacemaking with adversaries. On the other hand, Islamists tend to promote *jihad* as the means to establish the "Islamic" state. They take an aggressive stance towards the current national and international orders, which they seek to challenge with force. Their readings of Islamic scriptures confirms for them the legitimacy of the use of direct violence against their enemies. Post-modernist thinkers, such as Mohammed Arkoun, attempt to uncover the epistemological bases underlying such discourses: he argues against rigid interpretations of Islamic scripture to support one view or another, and instead proposes the exploration of the "*unthinkable*, which can only be reached by going beyond the frontiers of the closed dogmatic system" (1988b: 418).

**Jewish and Christian Notions of Holy War**

The conduct and the avoidance of violence appear to have a fundamental place in the activities of human society. In his acclaimed study on *Violence and the Sacred* (1979), René Girard presents evidence from ancient myths, Greek tragedy, biblical narratives, the rituals of "primitive" religions, and contemporary
judicial systems to demonstrate the central place of violence in human existence. Various societies have held it as an irrepressible force that has to be placated or diverted so that it does not destroy them. One of the ways in which they have sought to deal with the problem is with the institution of sacrifice, both animal and human. It is important, however, that the victim be "pure" so that its death is not avenged - thus breaking the cycle of violence. These victims, who are chosen for their absence of or weak links with members of society, are manifestations of the Other: prisoners of war, slaves, and even uninitiated youth, who in some cultures are considered marginal (ibid: 12). As an extension of these beliefs, war is waged against the outsider or infidel in order to channel violence away from the in-group.

Girard compares such legitimization of violence by religion with that approved by modern judicial systems (ibid: 15-24). Indeed, the state, which has a monopoly over legitimate violence, is very effective in curbing the cycle of vengeance. Since the modern judiciary is supposed to be objective and independent, it can sanction punitive violence without fear of reprisal from members of society. Looking at the issue from a functionalist perspective, the manner in which both religious culture and technological culture have dealt with the social problem of violence is indicative to Girard of certain similarities between the two.

To understand religious thought requires an empirical approach. The goal of religious thinking is exactly the same as that of technological research - namely, practical action. Whenever man is
truly concerned with obtaining concrete results, whenever he is hard pressed by reality, he abandons abstract speculation and reverts to a mode of response that becomes increasingly cautious and conservative as the forces he hopes to subdue, or at least outrun, draw even nearer. (Ibid: 32)

Paradoxically, the practical action (the ritual/technique) which the two cultures have adopted for the avoidance of violence, is violence itself. Religious and technological thought (as discussed in the previous chapter) adhere to the myth of Science - according to the latter, utopia can be achieved through continual progress involving the refinement of technique (Szanto, 1978: 40) or the repetition of ritual. In utopia there will be no violence. Thus, holy or just wars are fought to end all wars by eradicating the Other.

Kenneth L. Vaux (1992), a scholar of ethics, traces the evolution of the modern concept of just war to Jewish and Christian notions of holy war (also see Armstrong, 1988). Whereas its roots are to be found in ancient Greece and Rome, medieval Christian philosophers contributed significantly to the development of the idea. This was acknowledged by president George Bush as he sought to justify American military action against Iraq in the Gulf War. Speaking at a prayer breakfast of the National Religious Broadcasters Convention, during the second week of the hostilities, he said

The war in the Gulf is not a Christian war, a Jewish war, or a Moslem war - it is a just war. And it is a war with which good will prevail. (Applause.) We're told that the principles of a just war originated with classical Greek and Roman philosophers like Plato and Cicero. And later they were expounded by such Christian theologians as Ambrose, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas.¹
Whereas the Western powers' conduct of the Gulf War was not presented as a religious war by integration propagandists, its religious characteristics ("good will prevail") and Christian pedigree were highlighted. It was also significant that Bush presented the moral rationale for the war at the National Religious Broadcasters Convention. His own rationalization for engaging the US in the conflict appears to have been influenced by his personal religious convictions: the "born again" American president raised the matter with his own Episcopal congregation and engaged in worship and prayer with his closest advisers and with evangelist Billy Graham prior to the war (ibid: 44). The search for religious sanction for war appears to have been intense in both Washington and Baghdad (where Saddam Hussein couched it in terms of jihad).

The ultimate aim of the Gulf War in Bush's rhetoric was the global peace that would be ushered through the New World Order. This echoed centuries of justifications for holy war whose conduct and results were attributed to divine will. Holy war in the Old Testament was carried out to establish shalom (peace). One cannot peer into the hearts of those who made the decisions to carry out the Gulf War to ascertain their innermost convictions about the righteousness of their actions, but we do know that their words did appeal to the moral and ethical, if not the religious, traditions of their respective societies. A utopian peace would be ushered in for the whole region, which would justify the large scale killing and destruction that would precede it. "There was work to be done in the service of that peace that is the end purpose of the holy war," notes Vaux (ibid: 44-45).
Human societies have had to contend with the contradiction between the human propensity for violence and the religious/ethical taboo of shedding blood ("thou shalt not kill"). The resolution of this paradox has been the formulation of the concept of holy war/just war, which becomes the only legitimate form of war. Killing is justified, indeed made obligatory, in the name of a higher authority - God or the State. The French Foreign Legion's Code of Honour tells its members that "A mission once given to you becomes sacred to you, you will accomplish it to the end and at all cost." Killing others is rewarded and putting one's own life in danger while conducting war is recognized with high honours, and death with the status of martyrdom (both religious and secular).

The mythologies and rituals of holy war in early Israel, Islam, and the Christian Crusades served exactly the same purpose and had the same "truth value" and ethical import as rational theory in seventeenth-century Europe and modern jurisprudential theory about the law of war. Each asked: why shall we go to war and how shall war be fought? (Ibid: 42)

The early Jewish (Davidic) code of war, outlining the purposes and manners in which fighting should be carried out, forms the basis of the Christian, Muslim and modern international codes of war. Christian views on war, conflicting with the New Testament's advice of "turning the other cheek," evolved with the contributions of Augustine and Aquinas, who attempted to reconcile Christian pacifism with the contingency of defending Christendom against its enemies. The principles of just war developed by Aquinas provided the theological justification for the Crusades.
Interestingly, among the first modern theorists of just war were Spanish Jesuits, writing during the era of Spanish colonial expansion. ⁴

[They] articulated the dual ambition of missionizing and commercializing the New World. Francisco de Vitoria (1492-1546) and Francisco Suarez (1548-1617) took the position of Christian realism found in Augustine and Aquinas as the basis for a complex theory of the rights of nation-states to extend their interests to other peoples, especially those where governmental, legal, and ecclesiastical systems had yet to develop, at least in a form Europeans were willing to acknowledge. People have rights not only to defend their possessions and interests but to extend their needs to other realms. Cultivating what was virgin land, educating people who were preliterate, evangelizing where superstition and nature worship prevailed were now seen as divine responsibilities under the rubric of stewardship [emphasis added]. (Vaux, 1992: 110)

The Calvinist Hugo Grotius, whose work formed the foundation of contemporary international law, laid out a doctrine of ownership and expropriation of land and resources. While maintaining, in adherence to Old Testament tradition, that the goal of any warfare is the achievement of peace, he was instrumental in rationalizing the forceful acquisition by European powers of the non-European/non-Christian Other’s territories. ⁵ True peace (shalom) could only be established under European Christian rule.

According to Grotius, the conduct of war must be governed by a discerning conscience - a notion that was echoed by George Bush in the State of the Union address in January 1991.

Our cause is just. Our cause is moral. Our cause is right.
Let future generations understand the burden and the blessings of freedom. Let them say, we stood where duty required us to stand. Let them know together, we affirmed America, and the world, as a
Thus, while just war ethics have been secularized enough to become part of the technological society's dominant discourses, they carry very strong traces of Christian thought. In fact, the regulation of relations and conflicts between European states until 1856 was carried out according to a set of rules referred to as "Christian international law," which became the basis for contemporary international law (Peters, 1979: 136). Although the latter has been extended around the globe, it has not incorporated elements from non-Christian religious traditions. Attempts by Muslim modernists to promote the incorporation of the Muslim rules of warfare in international law have been resisted by Northern interests (ibid). Cultural constructions of international conflict therefore continue to be grounded in Christian perspectives.

The Origins and Nature of Jihad

The Islamic Shariah acknowledges the prevalence of conflict in human society and has regulations for the conduct of war. This is in keeping with the rules formulated by the various Muslim schools of law to regulate many other aspects of life. Theologians and jurists conceptualized the spiritual and the temporal as occupying the same space: the Shariah was a result of this worldview, providing for the laws which Muslims were expected to follow in the conduct of their affairs, both religious and political. The Muslim was expected to behave righteously in both spheres contemporaneously.
The term *jihad* means "exertion" or "struggle." Whereas other Arabic words such *harb* (war) and *qital* (fighting) specifically denote bloodshed, *jihad* does not necessarily involve physical conflict; the former could be used to describe non-religious (e.g. tribal and nationalist) wars or even illegitimate ones (i.e. not sanctioned by the *Shariah*). The fourteenth-century Arab social historian Ibn Khaldun described three other kinds of war apart from *jihad*. Although dominant Muslim discourses have traditionally favoured the meaning of religious struggle through war, this interpretation has coexisted with others. A primary non-martial understanding of *jihad* has been "struggle with the self." According to the eleventh-century founder of the Jilaniyya sufi order,

> Each time you struggle against your lower self (*nafs*) and overcome it and slay it with the sword of opposition, God restores it to life and it contends with you again, and demands of your desires and delights, whether forbidden or permissible, so that you must return to struggle and compete with it in order to carry off the everlasting reward. This is the meaning of the Prophet's saying - God bless him and give him peace - "We have returned from the lesser jihad (war) to the greater jihad (self-control)." He meant by this struggle with the Self, because it is always there, and because of its continuation in lusts and pleasures and its obstinate persistence in rebellion. (Williams, 1971: 281)

The level of self-control that is expected of the ideal Muslim is related by another prominent sufi, Jalal al-din Rumi (13th century), in narrating the heroic exploits of Ali, the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law. (The historical role of Ali is especially significant because he was the last of the "Rightly-Guided Caliphs" and is considered the founder of Shi'ism.) During the course of a battle, just as Ali was about to strike a lethal blow with his sword his opponent spat at him. At this point
he checked himself, stopped fighting, and turned away. When asked to explain his action, he replied:

In the hour of battle, O knight,
When thou didst spit in my face, my fleshy self was aroused and my (good) disposition was corrupted.
Half (of my fighting) came to be for God's sake, and half (for) idle passion: in God's affair partnership is not allowable ... (Rumi, 1977: 215)

*Jihad fi sabil Allah* ("struggle in the way of God") is viewed here as a very complex endeavour that demands the degree of self-control that can discern, even in the heat of battle, the difference between acting out of one's own anger and selfless service to God. Such an interaction, based on the myth of History, would reflect the relationship between the secondary myths of Happiness and Youth which "do constant creative battle within each person" (Szanto, 1978: 46). Such an inner dialectic would lead to a continual reassessment of changing circumstances by the individual and enable her or him to elude the trap of rigid and dogmatic prescriptions.

This form of *jihad* has also been referred to as *"jihad of the heart."* The *"jihad of the tongue,"* involving the verbal encouragement of good deeds and that of the pen are ways to conduct the *jihad* through education. *"Jihad of the hand"* means the physical administration of disciplinary measures by those in authority to prevent sinful behaviour. And *"jihad of the sword"* is fighting unbelievers for the sake of religion (Peters, 1979: 10; Martin, 1987: 59). The latter has become the most commonly-understood meaning of *"jihad"* when it is used without
Islam wishes to press into service all forces which can bring about a revolution and a composite term for the use of all these forces is "Jihad." To change the outlook of the people and initiate a mental revolution among them through speech or writing is a form of "Jihad." To alter the old tyrannical social system and establish a new just order of life by the power of sword is also "Jihad" and to expend goods and exert physically [sic] for this cause is "Jihad" too. (Maududi, 1976: 7)

Jihad has a number of interpretations and cannot be treated in a monolithic manner. The variety of opinions among Muslim authorities on the nature and characteristics of jihad is similar to that concerning many other religious issues.

The origins of the concept are to be found in the Koran and the traditions of the Prophet (hadith). However, there is seemingly contradictory guidance in the various Koranic verses and various hadiths, which have led to the adoption of differing positions by the Muslim schools of law. The advice of the Koran on relations with non-believers differed in the various periods of Muhammad's prophethood.

The first period of Islam was one of preaching, whereby Mohammed was ordered [by God] to keep aloof from polytheists and to avoid a confrontation with them. In this period K[oran] 15:94 was sent down: "Burst forth with what thou art commanded and turn from the polytheists." Subsequently, Mohammed was ordered to engage himself in a discussion with the unbelievers: "Summon to the way of thy Lord and goodly admonition, and argue against them with what is better" (K 16:125). When after the Hidjrah [the migration from Mecca to Medina] the Islamic community was continuously being harassed by the Meccans and some Moslems became impatient with Mohammed's passivity and wanted to strike back, the Moslems were given permission to fight: "Permission is granted to those who are fought against in that they have suffered wrong, who have been expelled from their dwellings
without justification ... (K 22:39). Fighting them was only allowed as a defence against attacks by the unbelievers, as can be learned from K 2:190: "Fight in the way of Allah those who fight you, but do not provoke hostility ...." Finally, the unconditional command to fight all unbelievers was sent down, when the following verses were revealed, abrogating all earlier verses: "Fighting is prescribed to you, though it is distasteful to you" (K 2:196); Then when the sacred months have slipped away, slay the polytheists wherever ye find them, seize them, beset them, lie in ambush for them everywhere; if they repent and establish the Prayer and pay the Zakat [religious dues], then set them free; Allah is forgiving, compassionate" (K 9:5) ... (K 9:29). (Peters, 1979: 14-15)

With the "Verses of the Sword" (9:5 and 9:29), war against polytheist tribes in the Arabian peninsula became a legitimate activity for Muslims striving to bring the inhabitants of Arabia into the fold. As in other human societies, violence was seen as a means to pacify the land and usher in utopia. The Koranic quest for salam (peace) through jihad seems to reflect the Old Testament’s search for shalom through holy war. Jews and Christians were given the option of becoming protected peoples, ahl al-dhimma, under Muslim suzerainty. With the increasing leeway in the Koran to engage polytheists in battle, the dominant legal-theological discourses after Muhammad’s death eventually treated this as the prescribed course of action. According to the dominant application of the rule of naskh (abrogation), a later Koranic verse repealed a previous one on a particular issue. In adherence to the myth of Science, utopia was to be achieved through progressive steps in a linear fashion, unlike the myth of History which views all situations as mutable and favours resolving them though a dialectical interaction between opposing elements.
Jihad was deemed to be a communal obligation which required the leadership of the Muslim state to organize and conduct. However, it became individual duty when an enemy attacked Muslim territory - in such a case it was incumbent upon all Muslims to fight back with or without the declaration of a formal campaign. Based on pertinent references in the Koran and the hadith, the various schools of law developed specific rules regarding the of waging jihad, which in many ways resembled the Davidic code of war inspired by the Old Testament (cf. Vaux, 1992: 46-47). Particular categories of people (women, minors, those with mental or physical disabilities etc.) were made exempt from the communal duty; before launching an attack, the enemy had to be given the opportunity to accept Muslim rule; the kinds of permissible weapons were listed; the classes of persons who could not be killed and the specific circumstances under which non-combatants could be attacked were identified; while the seizure of enemy property was allowed, burning or other forms of destruction of vegetation was not; Muslim combatants were not permitted to flee from the battlefield; assistance from non-Muslims was acceptable under certain circumstances; whereas trading could be carried out with enemy powers, particular kinds of goods could not be exported to them; the leader (Imam) was to make decisions regarding the fate of prisoners of war; quarter could be granted to particular persons in a hostile territory and safe-conduct to individuals at the borders of Muslim lands; treaties of peaceful coexistence could be conducted with enemy powers; finally, jihad was to be terminated upon the conversion of
unbelievers to "Islam" or when they submitted themselves to Muslim government without converting (ibid, 15-37; Williams, 1971: 262, 266-68). While this was the general tenor of regulations regarding *jihad*, there did not exist complete agreement on these points among the various schools of law.

The world was generally divided into two parts: the Territory of Islam (*dar al-Islam*) and the Territory of War (*dar al-harb*). A third category existed according to the Shafi‘i school - the Territory of Treaty (*dar al-sulh* or *dar al-‘ahd*), which referred to lands occupied by rulers who had made treaties with the Muslim state (Peters, 1979: 11). The Territory of Islam could be transformed into the Territory of War under three conditions, according to the founder of the Hanafi school:

1. Application of the laws of unbelievers;
2. Adjacency to the Territory of War;
3. Absence of the original security of life and property for the Moslems and the protected non-Moslems (*dhimmis*)... (ibid: 12)

The Muslim worldview had developed in this the characteristics which defined the loci of the collective Self and Other. The universal myths of the Community and the Other, discussed in Chapter 1, were manifested in terms of war and peace. In so far as the known world was divided into the Territory of Islam or War, it was analogous to the dichotomization of humanity by Hugo Grotius between Europe and the non-Christian/non-civilized Other and that which existed during the Cold War between the communist and capitalist blocs. As in these cases, the relationship between the two spheres was essentially confrontationary: ideology,
whether religious or political, exhorted followers to commit themselves to fighting the Other.

Putting one's life in danger "in the way of God" has been an important religious duty in dominant Muslim discourses, with believers being exhorted to respond enthusiastically to the call to arms. *Jihad* has been presented as an obligation for every believing male who does not belong to one of the exempt categories. Paradise would be denied to those who fail to perform this or any other important religious duty indicated by the *Shariah*. Death during *jihad*, on the other hand, virtually guaranteed salvation (Williams, 1971: 259-60). Ayatollah Khomeini sought to revive the notion of martyrdom through *jihad* among the Twelver Shia. The effect that his teachings had was apparent especially among certain militant Shia groups in Lebanon such as the Hizbollah. The following excerpt from the will of one "martyr" reveals the degree of conviction inspired by Khomeini.

... Khomeini showed us the path. He spoke the will of Allah, and those who had the good fortune to hear his voice first were taken away from the dirt of this world and led to the gate of the garden whose key is martyrdom. I am at the door now, and praise and thank the Almighty for my good fortune. I am seeking the key to the gate of garden. And I pray day and night to be allowed to feel the key in my hand, to be allowed to feel the key turn in the lock of the garden gate. And then to enter the garden, to see its wonders. The Imam [Khomeini] has commanded me to kill. I shall kill for him. The Imam has commanded me to die. I shall die for him. I may be taken away at any moment. I pray constantly to be taken away at any moment - fighting sword in hand in the service of Allah, as were the companions of Hussein in the Karbala desert. (Taheri, 1987: 235-36)
Self-immolation in the course of killing others for the purposes of God seemed to have become a necessary end for this willing martyr. The resistance against and eventual massacre of Muhammad's grandson, Husayn, and his family by the army of the Umayyad Caliph in 680 was the cognitive model for this man. However, whereas Husayn does not appear to have actively sought martyrdom (Jafri, 1979: 174-221), the follower of Khomeini saw it as a requirement for entry to paradise. Death in the course of carrying out violence against others seemed to have become the obligatory means for achieving salvation under this set of beliefs.¹¹

As discussed in the previous chapter, observing religious rites is akin to adherence to technique in the technological civilization - the goal of both being to attain utopia. In reducing jihad to a ritual and to legalism, the dominant Muslim discourses deprived it of the powerful dialectic within the Self, as in the action of Ali described by Jalal al-din Rumi. The continual inner jihad of an individual to strive for truth was superseded by jihad as a legal/religious obligation. Even though the dominant Muslim and the technological worldviews differ in many ways, both, based on the primary myth of Science, see conflict with the Other as the ritual/technique which will result in universal domination of the right belief and utopia for humanity.¹²

**Jihad in History**

After the death of Muhammad in 632, Muslim armies emerged from Arabia and within a few centuries conquered a broad swath of land from the
Iberian peninsula in the west to India in the east. The well-trained and equipped legions of the Iranian (Sassanid) and Byzantine empires, which were exhausted through continual warring against each other, were defeated by a few thousand poorly-armed and mostly nomadic Arabs. Vanquished peoples were accorded the status of the protected *ahl al-dhimma*, who did not serve in the Muslim army and paid poll taxes distinct from the religious dues that were obligatory for Muslims. These terms were laid out in peace documents such as the following drawn up after the fall of Damascus in 635.

> In the name of Allah, the compassionate, the merciful. This is what Khalid ibn al-Walid [a prominent Muslim general] would grant to the inhabitants of Damascus if he enters therein: he promises to give them security for their lives, property and churches. Their city wall shall not be demolished, neither shall any Moslem be quartered in their houses. Thereunto we give to them the pact of Allah and the protection of His Prophet, the caliphs and the believers. So long as they pay the poll tax, nothing but good shall befall them. (Hitti, 1970: 150)

In many cases, the local Monophysite, Coptic and Nestorian Christian as well as Jewish populations, which had been oppressed by the Greek Orthodox Byzantines and Zoroastrian Sassanids, were eager to expel the latter powers and were in favour of gaining protected status from the Muslim state (ibid: 139-68; Lapidus, 1988: 37-53).

> Inspired by the mission of carrying the Koranic message to all humanity, Arab armies were poised to reach far into Europe. Their advance was, however, stopped by Charles Martel at Poitiers (in France) in 732 - a century after Muhammad's death. The Muslim empire became sedentary as it absorbed the
ways of conquered peoples, and jihad gave way to treaties with neighbouring powers. Nomadic Turkic tribes arriving from their home in Mongolia from the tenth century onwards, converted to Islam and became the new warrior class. Not only did they stop the Mongols from completely devastating the central lands of the Muslim empire, but also carried the jihad westwards into Europe after conquering Constantinople in 1453. Muslim rulers found it in their interests to identify their wars, even against other Muslims, as jihad. This served to give religious legitimacy to the military campaigns which brought them worldly profit.

No one made more consistent use of the technique than Tīmur-i Lenk [Tamerlane], the Turkish Muslim Lord of Samarkand in Central Asia, who devastated the Islamic East under the banner of "holy war."

At the end of the fourteenth century, he visited the Muslims of Delhi with a terrible "jihad," and sacked and destroyed it on the pretence that the country was still full of infidels (who, however, were paying tribute). (Williams, 1971: 285)

The pious purposes of "striving in the way of God" appear to have been abandoned for material gains. A plurality of sultans fought with each other, and the caliph - who technically had the sole authority to proclaim the jihad remained powerless. (Iraq and Saudi Arabia - which was on the side of the United Nations Coalition - both declared jihad against each other during the Gulf War.)

Following European incursions into Africa and Asia, jihad was adopted as an important ideological and tactical means of opposition to colonialism. Several nineteenth-century Muslim movements in India, Sudan, Egypt and Palestine fought against the British, in Libya against the Italians, in Somalia against both
the British and Italians, in Algeria against the French, in Indonesia against the Dutch, and in Central Asia against the Russians. Jihad was both a means to mobilize people for resistance and to legitimize military action. According to a fatwa (legal opinion) issued by a prominent Indian theologian in 1803, India had reverted to being a Territory of War because it was under non-Muslim rule (Peters, 1979: 45). The Tariqa-i Muhammadi movement which carried out the jihad against the British administration had a large following of peasants and craftspeople who had suffered from the economic and social consequences of the colonial order. Despite military defeat and the death of its founding leaders, the movement survived underground.

It was against this background that the famous "Sepoy Mutiny" of Indian soldiers in the British army took place in 1857. While the followers of Tariqa-i Muhammadi played a role in inciting the civilian Muslim population, in many places Hindus and Muslims fought together against the colonial masters (ibid: 49-50). But the British saw the rebellion as an attempt of Muslim landed and military aristocracy to restore the rule of the Mughal sultan, and singled them out for particular repression in its aftermath. In an attempt to show that Muslims posed no threat to the colonial regime, many legal opinions, edicts and statements by modernist Muslim elements were issued to the effect that India was not a Territory of War and that military action against the British would be illegitimate under the Shariah (ibid: 50-53). This echoed an earlier verdict of the Egyptian religious authorities at Al-Azhar, Sunnism's premier seat of learning, which had declared
that attempts at resisting Napoleon's army were "against God's will" (Jansen, 1986: 15). Another reason for not carrying out the \textit{jihad} against European colonial rulers, provided by religious scholars in India and Algeria, was the weak probability of success (Peters, 1979: 51, 62). Indian modernists, led by Sayyid Ahmad Khan, asserted that \textit{jihad} was essentially limited to defence against the religious persecution that specifically impeded the performance of what dominant Muslim discourses consider to be "the five pillars of Islam": the profession of faith, prayer, religious dues, fasting and pilgrimage. In thus removing \textit{jihad} from the political sphere and limiting it to the defence of the fundamentals of the faith, Sayyid Ahmad Khan made a definite separation of Church and State - which was hitherto alien to dominant Muslim discourses.

By the end of the nineteenth century the notion that \textit{jihad} was defensive had become current in many other Muslim societies, including those in the Middle East. However, unlike their Indian counterparts, modernists there rejected the idea that fighting was not justified when the enemy only attacked the political and economic interests of Muslims but not their religion. They considered it legitimate to carry out the \textit{jihad} against colonial powers who did not necessarily prevent the practice of Islam. Nevertheless, the Koran's guidance received in the last period of Muhammad's life, which seemed to sanction war against polytheists unconditionally, was reinterpreted through contextual exegesis by Sheikh Mahmud Shaltut, an Egyptian religious authority.

Read those verses ..., then you will realize that they were revealed
with regard to people recalcitrantly practising persecution, amongst whom the elements of depravation were so deeply rooted that they did not respect pledges anymore and that virtue became meaningless to them. (Ibid: 128)

An attempt was made in this way to retract what hitherto had been generally considered the unrestricted command to fight all unbelievers. This reflected the acceptance by modernists of the principle of peaceful relations between the Muslim state and the rest of the world. The Territory of War was being transformed into what Sayyid Ahmad Khan termed "Dar-ul-aman, or 'land of security', in which the Moslem may lawfully reside as moostamin, or seeker of aman [security]" (ibid: 52).

As dominant Northern discourses have taken hold in Muslim societies, the discourses of modernist Muslims have increasingly been couched within technological myths, particularly the myth of the Nation. With the secularization of the Muslim state, national conflicts have become coextensive with jihad - which itself has been secularized in some cases. During the Arab-Israeli war in 1973, the Rector of Al-Azhar University in Cairo, appealing to the nationalist sentiments of Muslim and Christian Egyptians, declared:

Jihad is an obligation for all, without distinction between Moslems and Christians. It is the first duty of all who live under the sky of Egypt, the fatherland of all ... Being killed (istishhad) [literally, "martyred"] for the sake of the fatherland gives access to Paradise. (Ibid: 134)

President Habib Bourguiba of Tunisia, addressing the subject of national development, stated: "Escaping from [economic] backwardness is jihad-
obligation, ruled by the same prescription as jihad by the means of sword" (ibid: 119). Religious and national duty appear to have merged in these discourses, which, based on the myth of Science, promise utopia upon performance of the ritual/technique of jihad. Bourguiba effected the secularization of the latter by constructing it in accordance to the technological myths of Work and the Nation. Within the perspectives of these myths, development is supposed to occur once citizens are integrated into a national system of production and consumption. Whereas the reduction of jihad from an inner spiritual dialectic to legalism was accomplished by medieval Muslim jurists, it is currently being harnessed to technological worldviews by Muslim modernists acting as integration propagandists of dominant global discourses. Islamists, on the other hand, have been working to reinstate the medieval status of the concept.

**The Islamist Jihad**

There has emerged from Islamist sources a defence of jihad that is unapologetic and unbending. This discourse sees the concept as the means to save Muslim societies from self-destruction. Militant Muslim groups are vehemently critical of the interpretations provided by modernists and are deeply suspicious of Northern interests. One of the key Islamist ideologues in South Asia, Abul A’la Maududi, delivered an address in 1939 attacking European colonists for characterizing Muslims as being endemically violent when they themselves had acquired much of the world through conquest:
They ... have set upon the world pillaging it for the capture of new markets of trade, resources of raw material, open lands for colonisation and mines yielding valuable metals, so that they may procure fuel for their everburning fire of avarice. They fight not for the cause of God but for the satisfaction of their lust and hunger... Their skill is, however, commendable that they have painted our picture so gory and dark that their own picture was overshadowed and was completely hidden from the view. Our own simplicity is amazing too. When we saw this picture of ours painted by the foreigners, we were so taken aback that we never thought of looking behind the canvas and seeing the visage of the painter. Instead we started offering apologies in this manner - Sir, what do we know of war and slaughter? ... To refute certain religious beliefs and convert the people to some other faith instead, that is the be-all and end-all of our enthusiasm... Yes, indeed, we plead guilty to one crime, though, that whenever someone else attacked us, we attacked him in self-defence. Now, of course, we have renounced that also. The crusade which is waged by swords has been abrogated for the satisfaction of your honour. Now "Jihad" only refers to waging war with the tongue and the pen. To fire cannons and shoot with guns is the privilege of your honour's government and waging tongues and scratching with pens is our pleasure. (Maududi, 1976; 1-3)

While Maududi fervently rejected colonialist discourses, it would be incorrect to state that he was unaffected by Northern ideas. He spoke of "Islam" as "a revolutionary ideology and programme which seeks to alter the social order of the whole world," Muslims as constituting an "International Revolutionary Party," and jihad as a "revolutionary struggle" (ibid: 5). Marx and Lenin definitely appear to have influenced his vocabulary and his strategic outlook, although he does not appear to have embraced their ideologies.

Maududi's ideas had an effect in other Muslim societies including Egypt, which has had a tradition of religious militancy going back to the early decades of this century. The Muslim Brethren has been a premier Egyptian organization
preaching the return to a society ruled by the Shariah. Their slogan has been:

Allah is our goal. The Prophet is our leader. The Koran is our constitution. Struggle (djihad) is our way (sabil). Death in the service of Allah is the loftiest of our wishes. Allah is great, Allah is great. (Mitchell, 1969: 193-94)

Its members were involved in a jihad in Palestine against Jewish settlers before and after the formation of Israel. Over the years, it has been periodically banned and reinstated by the Egyptian government, and its leaders and members have been jailed and some executed. Among its most outspoken leaders was Sayyid Qutb, who was tried and executed by the Egyptian government in 1966.

According to Qutb, the North was in decline and was devoid of the values necessary for the future of human civilization (Hourani, 1991: 445-46). Borrowing from Koranic narratives, he characterized the contemporary situation as that existing during the time of Moses and the Pharaoh - whose story has popular resonance in Egyptian society (Goldberg, 1992: 207-11). Through this he indicated that the current government, based on a Northern model, had to be overthrown by

a vanguard of dedicated fighters, using every means, including jihad, which should not be undertaken until the fighters had achieved inner purity, but should then be pursued, if necessary, not for defence only, but to destroy all worship of false gods and remove all the obstacles which prevented men from accepting Islam. (Hourani, 1991: 446)

Qutb's proposal that the contemporary Egyptian state be violently displaced due to its "unIslamic" nature was a novel idea among Islamists, who had hitherto not preached jihad against domestic Muslim rulers. The latter were also lambasted by
Qutb for promoting a state of *jahiliyya* (literally, a state of ignorance) - the Koranic term applied to the societal chaos of pre-Islamic Arabia - which made armed revolt against them legitimate. This was to have a profound effect on the next generation of Muslim militants (see Martin, 1987).

In the aftermath of the 1967 "Six-Day War," during which Arab countries led by Egypt were soundly defeated by Israel, the Islamist movement grew rapidly. The sheer scale of the military debacle was interpreted by many as punishment from God upon the Arab secular state for having abandoned religion and embraced "alien systems" and "man-made ideologies" (Haddad, 1982: 41-2). There was a deliberate turning away from Northern influences back to religion by large numbers of Egyptian Muslims (as well as Christians). While most Muslims returned to traditional forms of piety, some found the activist messages of the various Islamist groups more appealing. It is interesting to note that many of the leaders and ideologues of Egyptian Islamist groups operating in the 1970s and early 1980s had degrees in the natural sciences but no formal training in Islamic theology (Ibrahim, 1980: 436). While the Islamist movement was strong in universities based on Northern models, militant activity in traditional institutions of learning such as Al-Azhar was rare. It is the complete and sudden replacement of the religious worldview by a secularist, empiricist discourse which appears to have resulted in the reaction that drove certain individuals to militancy (Arkoun, 1987b: 67).

Some of the groups which these people joined were dedicated to the
overthrow of the secularist government through *jihad*. They carried out wide-ranging activities against the state from political agitation to attacks on government representatives. One of them, the Tanzim al-Jihad, succeeded in assassinating president Anwar Sadat in October 1981. A key document that sheds light on the views of such groups is a pamphlet published in December 1981 by Tanzim al-Jihad’s ideologue, Muhammad Abd al-Salam Faraj. *The Neglected Duty (Al-Farida al-Gha’iba)* referred to *jihad* as a religious obligation which Muslims had disregarded.

*Jihad* ... for God’s cause, in spite of its extreme importance and its great significance for the future of this religion, has been neglected by the ‘*ulama* (leading Muslim scholars) of this age. They have feigned ignorance of it, but they know that it is the only way to the return and the establishment of the glory of Islam anew. (Jansen, 1986: 160-61)

Religious war had to be carried out by Muslims in order to re-establish the earthly utopia of the "Islamic" state.

The document made selective use of source material from the Koran, Muhammad’s traditions, legal treatises and historical sources, refuting out of hand any contrary opinions. Faraj presented a case on the legitimacy of attacking the current government of Egypt, drawing support from the opinions of Ibn Taymiyya, a 13th-14th century scholar renowned for his "puritanical activism" (Rahman, 1966: 108) and for inspiring revivalist movements in previous eras. The "ungodly rulers" of Muslim lands whom Ibn Taymiyya had assailed were the Mongols, whom Faraj compared to the current secularist regime in Cairo (Jansen, 1986:...
There is no doubt that the Mongol Yasa [law?] is less of a sin than the laws which the West has imposed ... and which have no connection with Islam or any other revealed religion" (172). Since the local leaders were viewed as pivotal in implementing Northern imperialism in Egypt they had to be dealt with as an initial step: "We must concentrate on our own Islamic situation: we have to establish the Rule of God's Religion in our own country first, and to make the Word of God supreme ..." (193). The secularist Egyptian leaders were even more culpable than either Northerners or the Mongol rulers of the past because "they are in apostasy from Islam" (169) - a heinous offence according to the Shariah.

Founding a political party to oppose the government within parliament would entail cooperating with the dominant order and ensuring its continuation. This was considered pointless by Faraj because the ultimate purpose of his program was the destruction of the existing state.

To work through a political party will ... have the opposite effect, since it means building the pagan State and collaborating with it... (Moreover, such an Islamic political party) will participate in the membership of legislative councils that enact laws without consideration for God's Laws. (184)

Faraj believed that his group's purposes could only be achieved through a radically different discourse that promoted violent revolution and the overturning of the established system.

Adopting a radically violent stance against the Muslims whom he considered to have strayed from the straight and narrow, Faraj preached jihad against them. The document quoted from Ibn Taymiyya to support this position:
Any group of people that rebels against any prescript of the clear and reliably transmitted precepts of Islam has to be fought, according to the leading scholars of Islam, even if members of this group pronounce the Islamic Confession of Faith. (192)

Ibn Taymiyya himself had attacked the rationalist methodology of many of the Muslim philosophers and theologians who had preceded him, and challenged his contemporaries (Fakhry, 1983: 315-18; Rahman, 1966: 177-78). Taking a leaf out of Ibn Taymiyya's book, Faraj attacked the contemporary religious establishment in al-Azhar stating that it had paid obeisance to imperialism since the time of Napoleon (Jansen, 1986: 190). Deriding the ulama, he declared that jihad in the form of fighting was superior to that carried out in the quest for knowledge (188-89).

Non-violent propagation of the faith was also considered ineffective:

... how can ... propaganda be widely successful when all means of (mass) communication today are under the control of the pagan and wicked (State) and ... of those who are at war with God's religion? The ... really effective method could be to liberate the media from the control of these people. (186)

However, Faraj seemed to contradict himself when, arguing for active involvement of Muslims to rectify the country's political situation, he quoted this tradition of Muhammad: "The best form of jihad is a word of truth (spoken to) a tyrannical Ruler" (184). Despite this, he considered the "jihad of the sword" to be more important than the "jihad of the tongue." The "jihad of the heart" was rejected outright. Faraj considered the tradition in which Muhammad is said to have described the struggle against the self as "the greater jihad" and religious war
as "the lesser jihad" to be fabricated (201). Any dilution of the militant interpretation of jihad - which provides the religious legitimacy for their violent programs - is shunned by groups like Tanzim al-Jihad.

Having decided that only extreme measures can effect the societal changes they deem necessary, the discourses of such Islamist groups are mainly focused on the coercive and are almost completely devoid of the consensual. However, while they appear to reject the dominant technological discourses, the myth of the Nation is not entirely absent in their worldview. The Neglected Duty preached rebellion against the Egyptian state, not a general uprising against all secularized governments with Muslim populations and even less a worldwide revolution against the international order (not yet at least). By limiting its approach to the retransformation of a particular state into an "Islamic" one the Tanzim al-Jihad was subscribing to the technological myth of the Nation. Nevertheless, it was firmly set against other aspects of technological discourses, particularly secularism. Faraj wanted Egypt to be ruled by the Shariah, which would enable it to "have a brilliant future both economically and agriculturally" (164). However, the document failed to provide a real alternative to the dominant technological discourse in so far as both subscribe to the utopic vision of the myth of Science. The precise manners in which a contemporary "Islamic" state would be run was also left unsaid. As Aziz Al-Azmeh notes, this is not unusual for groups such as Tanzim al-Jihad:

Islamist political discourse is loath to specify the political system
that the Islamic state would create and invigilate. It normally rests content with emphasizing the uniqueness of this society, it being one where God is the sole legislator. Beyond the legal order which re-enacts the primitivist utopia, nothing remains but a savage vitalism: the social order will "emerge vitally" from doctrine ...

(Al-Azmeh, 1993: 28)

Responses to The Neglected Duty

The pamphlet written by Muhammad Abd al-Salam Faraj, being one of the few known ideological tracts produced by the contemporary Islamist movement in Egypt, has been the focus of much scholarly discussion. The official response from the religious establishment at Al-Azhar, which Faraj had attacked, came in the form of a fatwa (legal opinion) published by Egypt's mufti (leading Shari'ah scholar), Sheikh Jadd al-Haqq, in January 1982. He tackled Faraj's arguments point by point, attempting to refute them by quoting scripture and legal sources.

The Shaykh disagreed with the sole interpretation of jihad as fighting: he pointed to the end of the Koranic "Verse of the Sword" (9:5) permitting war against polytheists to indicate the essentially peaceful premise upon which it was made conditional: "if they repent and establish the Prayer and pay the Zakat [religious dues], then set them free; Allah is forgiving, compassionate" (Jansen, 1986: 56-57). In this respect, jihad could not be legally waged against the rulers of Egypt who were practising Muslims. Furthermore, Jadd al-Haqq pointed out, the verse was addressed to pagan Arabs in Muhammad's time who did not have a treaty with the Muslim state. He also challenged Ibn Taymiyya's strict rules of belief and
apostasy by citing the Koran (4:94) and Muhammad's traditions, according to which the only sin which can render a Muslim an apostate is the denial of *tawhid* - the unity of God (Jansen, 1986: 54). Also, the Shaykh discounted the validity of comparing the "savage destructive Mongols on the one hand, and the rulers and the inhabitants of Egypt on the other" (ibid: 56).

The *fatwa* stated that while Islamic scripture commanded Muslims to resist the enemies of "Islam," it did not order them to attack other Muslims or non-Muslim citizens, who had equal rights in the contemporary state.

The character of *jihad*, so we must understand, has now changed radically, because the defense of country and religion is nowadays the duty of the regular army, and this army carries out the collective duty of *jihad* on behalf of all citizens. (60)

The Shaykh used this modernist interpretation of the concept to turn the tables on Faraj. He declared that since the system of conscription into the army was the present-day equivalent of pledging loyalty to the prophet Muhammad, the Tanzim al-Jihad were actually fighting against God and the Prophet.

Jadd al-Haqq upheld the validity of the notion of *jihad* against the self. And in response to Faraj's specific charges against the *ulama* he insisted that the quest for knowledge was indeed integral to *jihad*. The Shaykh charged that the Tanzim al-Jihad was promoting disregard for both the religious as well as the secular sciences and that their document was a "call for illiteracy and primitivism in the name of Islam" (58). Responding to Faraj's reference to the Egyptian *ulama*'s collaboration with Napoleon, the *mufti* claimed that the religious
establishment had played a leadership role in resisting colonialism.

According to Johannes Jansen, who studied various responses of the Egyptian Muslim religious establishment to The Neglected Duty, Jadd al-Haqq's statement is "unambiguous, detailed, and authoritative" (54). While the shaykh did not deny the violent aspects of jihad, he attempted to emphasize the specific conditions under which they could be manifested. Like other modernist explanations of the concept, his is supported by contextual analysis of scripture indicating how particular courses of action were recommended only under particular circumstances. And also like other modernists, he attempted to find antecedents of various features of the contemporary state in early Muslim history. Whereas Faraj also adhered to the myth of the Nation, he rejected the secularist manifestations of the modern state; the Shaykh, on the other hand, sought to blend the religious and the secular.

We find a more profound analysis in Mohammed Arkoun's commentary on The Neglected Duty. He carries out an epistemological study of the document, scrutinizing the underlying cognitive system of what Jansen had called the "coherence and the force of its logic" (Jansen, 1986: xvii). Arkoun states that the political consensus achieved among Islamist movements since the 1970s tends to obscure the theological issues and historiographical debates that were considered crucial by classical thinkers. There has therefore been an epistemic shift within the cognitive system characteristic of Islamic thought: the principle of returning to the basic texts is maintained, or applied even more rigidly than before, but the semantic and discursive handling of the texts is made wholly subordinate to an ideological objective, ruling out all the
'scientific' procedures (syntax, semantics, rhetoric, history, theology or even philosophy) which previously every doctor of Law (Imam mujtahid) was required to master. (Arkoun, 1988b: 417)

Although Faraj had laced his work with quotations from scripture and revered legal authorities, his ignorance of the traditional methods was apparent in the presentation of arguments. There was little concern for the philological or the contextual - two important indices in traditional Muslim exegesis - in what was essentially an exhortative and polemical tract. Thus, according to Arkoun, Muslim scripture was presented as a static body of texts which were not open to analysis and discussion: jihad became fixed in the particular interpretation which Faraj imposed on it, veiling the wide variety of opinions (historical and contemporary) about its nature and characteristics.

Arkoun identifies seven tendencies manifested in The Neglected Duty which constitute the epistemic framework of Islamist discourses that present the Koran as a "closed official corpus":

1. "Everything occurs within the closed dogmatic system made up of the Koranic corpus and the semantic, legal and theological extensions selected, consecrated and transmitted by 'orthodox' tradition";

2. "Attention is fixed on the divine Commandment and the duty of every believer to obey it";

3. "the legal prevails over the theological" in that the overriding regard for the guidance about practical behaviour regarding jihad in the two "Verses
of the Sword" overshadows 114 other Koranic verses which counsel living in peace as a general mode of behaviour for Muslims;

4. "The crucial question of abrogation [of some Koranic verses by others] is settled once and for all by 'authorities' consecrated by tradition (in reality there is discussion [i.e. debate] on the principle and procedures among the classical doctors)";

5. "Polytheists, infidels and the faithful are no longer considered as competing social groups but as types of theological and legal status described in the same legal terms (hukm) in the most varied historical contexts";

6. "The original historical and sociological contingencies that motivated the Commandments in verses IX,5 and II,216 [the 'Verses of the Sword'] are elevated to the Sublime and made transcendental by virtue of the general context of meaning proceeding from the phenomenon of revelation"; and

7. In the Islamist discourse, scholars like Ibn Taymiyya and the founders of the schools of law "participate fully and authentically in the phenomenon of revelation" - seemingly on par with the Prophet himself: "their information is incontestable and their interpretations infallible; each represents a benchmark of dogma ensuring the 'logical' and 'coherent' functioning of the shared Islamic discourse" (ibid: 417-18).

It is within this closed dogmatic system that personhood is constructed by Islamist discourses, and as a corollary, the justification to carry out jihad against
individuals who are deemed non-persons. Unbelievers, apostates and others living in the Territory of War - characterized as such by the consecrated traditional authorities - thus become legitimate targets.

The official discourses of the religious establishment, which contrives modernist explications of scripture for the secularist state, and the oppositional discourses of the Islamists, who favour rigid anti-modernist interpretations, both operate within the closed dogmatic system and adhere to the myth of Science. Arkoun's alternative postmodernist discourse (discussed in the previous chapter) urges a dialectical approach to understanding "Islam." In adherence to the myth of History, he views society as well as its interpretations of received wisdom as continually being in flux. He does not see scripture as a closed corpus but as a source of "permanent tension between God ... and man .... This is not a static dualist opposition, but a continuous dialectic tension ..." (Arkoun, 1988a: 69). He has proposed the study of concepts such as jihad by stepping outside dominant Muslim discourses into the realm of the "unthinkable, which can only be reached by going beyond the frontiers of the closed dogmatic system" (1988b: 418). The historical and cultural aspects of the constructions of jihad need to be analyzed in order to understand how this concept has been manipulated by various parties.

Unfortunately, few Northern observers are aware of the vigorous competition between various Muslim discourses on jihad and on other issues. While jihad has dominantly been viewed as denoting fighting, this perception has been challenged continually within Muslim societies. The intolerant attitude
which interprets scriptural guidance as giving permission for unconditional war against unbelievers has been promoted, among others, by those who have wanted to profit materially from wars and those driven by socio-economic and political circumstances to fight their oppressors. Northern journalists, who usually translate *jihad* as "holy war," are generally unaware of the debates in Muslim discourses on the nature of *jihad*, the technical points of exegesis such as abrogation of verses, the validity of specific prophetic traditions, the consecration of particular authorities, or even the similarities between *jihad* and Northern conceptions of holy war and just war. As a result, their work serves to support dominant discourses on "Islam" that make an essential link between *jihad* and "Islamic terrorism."

**Notes**


2. "In 1988 Bush had declared that he had been 'born again' and had accepted Christ as his personal saviour." Vaux (1992: 91).


4. Esther Cohen and Sophia Menaché (1986) have sought to show that the concept of just war was used by emerging monarchies during the 15th century, thus contributing to the birth of "national consciousness."

5. Examples of such thought can also be found in earlier Christian texts from the Middle Ages. See Hermann (1989: 119-49).

6. For a discussion of *jihad* within a semiotic context, see Martin (1987). He also provides a short annotated bibliography on the subject (67-68).

7. Ibn Khaldun listed (1) the war between neighbouring groups, (2) that caused by hostility, (3) "the one the religious law calls 'the holy war,' and (4) dynastic war (1967, vol. 2: 74).
8. Selections from Koranic verses and Muhammad's traditions referring to jihad appear in Williams (1971: 255-62). Most collections of Muhammad's traditions have separate sections on the subject, for example the authoritative compilation Sahih Muslim has a chapter titled "The Book of Jihad and Expedition" (Imam Muslim, 1976: 938-1006).

9. Whereas Muhammad did succeed in gaining the allegiance of all Arabia, either through persuasion and conquest, he did not carry the jihad to foreign lands. This was done after his death by his successors, the Caliphs.

10. Among the dissenting opinions was that of the fifteenth-century scholar Al-Suyuti (Jansen, 1986: 196-97).

11. For another view of jihad and martyrdom, see Abul-Fadl (1987: 26-28).

12. According to Ayatollah Khomeini, "All countries conquered by Islam or to be conquered in the future will be marked for everlasting salvation. For they shall live under Light Celestial Law ..." Quoted in Taheri (1987: 229).

13. In Twelver Shia law, it was traditionally the prerogative of the hereditary Imam to delegate a leader for this purpose (Williams: 268). Although not descended from the lineal Imams, Ayatollah Khomeini was considered by a number of Twelver Shi'ites to be an "imam" (a title also given to a prominent religious scholar) and to have legitimately declared jihad against imperialist interests and against Iraq (cf. Taheri, 1987: 228-43).

14. President Anwar Sadat of Egypt was also adept at couching Islamic concepts within the myth of the Nation: he once attempted to propose an interpretation of the central principle of tawhid, monotheism, in the context of the unity of the "Arab nation." Vatikiotis (1965: 198).

15. The organization has spread to other Arab countries, particularly Syria and Sudan.


17. Among those who have commented extensively on the document are Goldberg (1992), Rapoport (1990), Arkoun (1988), and Jansen (1986).
Chapter 5
Orientalist Imaginaries
The Origins of Orientalism

The persistence of the core stereotypes of Muslims in Northern discourses is reviewed here. Borrowing from Cornelius Castoriadis (1987), Mohammed Arkoun uses the notion of "imaginaries" to explain how the Self comes to conceptualize itself and the Other.

... the "imaginary" of an individual, a social group, or a nation is the collection of images carried by that culture about itself or another culture - once a product of epics, poetry, and religious discourse, today a product primarily of the media and secondarily of schools. In this sense, of course, individuals and societies have their own imaginaries tied to their own common languages. There are thus French, English and German ways of imagining Islam - imaginaries, as they have come to be called - just as there are Algerian, Egyptian, Iranian, and Indian imaginaries of the West. Since the 1950s the powerful, omnipresent media, drawn daily to report on the violent happenings of the moment - national liberation movements, protests, and revolts in the numerous and diverse countries inhabited by Muslims - have fed the Western imaginary of Islam. (1994: 6-7).

The current Northern imaginaries about Muslims have their roots in age-old notions about "Islam." Certain basic notions about the characteristics of Muslims, having survived hundreds of years, feed the dominant discourses of the contemporary media. Similarly, the primary stereotypes that Muslims have about Northerners also inform their current constructions of Europe and North America (Ghanoonparvar, 1993; A. Ahmed, 1992; Mernissi, 1992; Clark and Mowlana, 1978). However, Muslim societies have not institutionalized their imaginaries about the Northern societies to the extent that the latter have done of "Islam," especially over the last two centuries.
Edward Said has contributed significantly to explain the working of this process. His publication of Orientalism in 1978 was an important event in the history of cultural studies. It made a strong case in attempting to demonstrate a complicity between academically-constructed knowledge and institutions of power, specifically between Orientalist scholarship in Europe and North America and the colonization of Muslim countries. In doing so, Said provides the framework for the development of similar critiques of the dominant discourses by other non-dominant elements of society.

His injunction that criticism must be affiliated to the world of which it is a part has exercised a powerful moral pressure. It has also enabled those from minorities, whether they be characterized as racial, sexual, social, or economic, to stake their critical work in relation to their own political positioning rather than feel obliged to assume the transcendent values of the dominant discourse of criticism. This in turn has contributed to the widespread interrogation of the history and presuppositions of that dominant discourse and, particularly, its relation to Western imperialism in both its colonial and neocolonial phases. (Young, 1990: 126)

While Said's contributions to the reconceptualization of the production of academic knowledge and its relation to the political exigences of the state were far-reaching, it is the Orientalist discipline that has felt the primary impact of his critical onslaught. Despite previous criticism of Orientalism by several writers¹, it was not until Said's conducted his ground-breaking examination of Northern imaginaries of the Orient that this issue became a recognized area of academic concern.
In Orientalism he analyzed the works of painters, belle lettrists, historians, linguists, archaeologists, travellers, colonial bureaucrats, and statesmen to demonstrate the links between knowledge and power in the context of the relationship between Northern and Muslim societies. Said acknowledges his debt to Michel Foucault, particularly the latter's contribution to the understanding of the construction of knowledge within the parameters of a discursive field. Using this approach, he sought to demonstrate that the "truths" about the Orient were presented by Northern academia within a delimited discourse that served to justify the hegemony of Europe.

Orientalism is not merely a political subject matter or field that is reflected passively by culture, scholarship, or institutions; nor is it a large and diffuse collection of texts about the Orient; nor is it representative and expressive of some nefarious "Western" imperialist plot to hold down the "Oriental" world. It is rather a distribution of geographical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts; it is an elaboration not only of a basic geographical distinction (the world is made up of two unequal halves, Orient and Occident) but also of a whole series of "interests" which, by such means as scholarly discovery, philological reconstruction, psychological analysis, landscape and sociological description, it not only creates but also maintains; it is, rather than expresses a certain will or intention to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate, even to incorporate, what is a manifestly different (or alternative and novel) world; it is, above all, a discourse that is by no means in direct, corresponding relationship with political power in the raw, but rather is produced and exists in an uneven exchange with power political (as with a colonial or imperial establishment), power intellectual (as with reigning sciences like comparative linguistics or anatomy, or any of the modern policy sciences), power cultural (as with orthodoxies and canons of taste, texts, values), power moral (as with ideas about what "we" do and "they" cannot do or understand as "we" do). Indeed, my real argument is that Orientalism is - and does not simply represent - a considerable
dimension of modern political-intellectual culture, and has less to
do with the Orient than it does with "our" world. (Said, 1978: 12)
The latter point is particularly important to Said, who contends that the West
defines itself by constructing the Orient as a primary Other. This process had been
taking place for hundreds of years preceding the emergence of Orientalism as a distinct pursuit.

There are varying views about the origins of Orientalist imaginaries. Maxime Rodinson asserts that while Christian polemical attacks on "Islam" had begun with the earliest contacts of the two religions, it was not until Europe embarked on enlarging its ambit that its typifications of Muslims began to take a clear shape: "The image of Islam arose, not so much as some have said from the Crusades, as from the slowly welded ideological unity of the Latin Christian world which led both to a clearer view of the enemy's features and also to a channelling of effort towards the Crusades" (1974: 10-11). It was in preparation of the holy war against the infidel who had usurped the Holy Land that the ideological assault against "Islam" was earnestly initiated. Indeed, just as there was emerging, near the end of the Middle Ages, the idea of a Christian Europe as Self, that the Muslim Other became more sharply defined. Later, during the European colonization of Asian and African territories, academic Orientalists provided "scientific" justifications for subjecting foreign peoples. And, as will be discussed later (in Chapters 11 and 12) the disappearance of the Soviet foe has led to the earnest
reconstruction of the Muslim a primary Other by Western integration

propagandists. The need to develop negative images of the enemy exists because

a people strongly committed to the ideal of peace but simultaneously faced with the reality of war, must believe that the fault for any such disruption of their ideal lies with others. (Ivie, 1980: 280)

In order to motivate the followers of the "Prince of Peace" for the Crusades, the Muslim Other had to be presented as a savage who threatened to destroy Christendom.

Shiraz Dossa seeks to take the origins of Orientalism further back to ancient Greece. He contends that "Orientalism as an invidious intellectual disposition is pre-Islamic: Islam reshaped the discourse of Orientalism but it did not cause the birth of Orientalism" (1987: 344). He does not find the division of the human universe into the West and the Orient in Homer; but by the time of the historian Herodotus "the Greeks generally felt that as a community and as a culture they were indisputably superior to the Orientals" (ibid). Although Dossa holds that Herodotus "did not succumb to Greek ethnocentricism and cultural pride" (345), my own reading indicates that the historian was not above making the following remarks about Persians:

If an important decision is to be made, they discuss the question when they are drunk, and the following day the master of the house where the discussion was held submits the decision for reconsideration when they are sober. If they still approve it, it is adopted; if not, it is abandoned. Conversely, any decision they make when they are sober, is reconsidered afterwards when they are drunk. (Herodotus, 1972: 97)
Or about Indians and Ethiopians:

All the Indian tribes I have mentioned copulate in the open like cattle; their skins are all of the same colour, much like the Ethiopians'. Their semen is not white like other peoples', but black like their own skins - the same peculiarity is to be found in the Ethiopians. (246)

While the tone of the descriptions is objective, it betrays the emergence of notions about Orientals as exotic creatures. Ancient Greek historians may not have firmly established the notion of the Oriental Other, but one finds the image of "Orientals as barbarians 'par excellence'" (Dossa, 1987: 346) in the writings of the tragic dramatists such as Aeschylus. The medium of drama allowed for the polarization of good and bad personified by Greek and Oriental characters.

The task of developing a theory that attempted to explain an essential difference between the Hellenes and the Oriental Other was taken up by the political philosophers, according to Dossa. A worldview that carefully divided humanity into parts with clear differences began to emerge. In The Republic, Plato asserted that the "love of knowledge" is "ascribed chiefly to our own part of the world" while "the love of money" is attributed to "Phoenicia and Egypt" (Plato, 1945: 132).

For Plato, the tendency to slavishness was intrinsic to the character of the Oriental and this was the reason Orientals could never produce a just polity. Unjust by nature, they were incapable of understanding justice, being just, or treating their fellow-barbarians with justice. (Dossa, 1987: 347)

Since s/he was slavish by nature, the Oriental barbarian was only fit for enslavement by Greeks who "must not ... hold any Greek in slavery themselves ..."
plato, 172). While there does not appear to emerge a hierarchy of "races," the Greeks were definitely posited as a community set apart from all others:

the Greeks are a single people all of the same kindred and alien to the outer world of foreigners ... (173).

In Aristotle's Politics we see a further elaboration of the differences between Greek and the barbaric Other. Like Plato, his premises of who was fit to rule were also based on the notion of who was free and who was a slave by nature. This depended on how well the soul, the mark of rationality, was developed in particular types of persons.

For rule of free over slave, male over female, man over boy, are all natural, but they are also different, because, while parts of the soul are present in each case, the distribution is different. Thus the deliberative faculty in the soul is not present at all in a slave; in a female it is inoperative, in a child undeveloped. (Aristotle, 1962: 52)

All non-Greeks were slaves by nature (36), and

as the poets say, 'It is proper that Hellenes should rule over barbarians,' meaning that barbarian and slave are by nature identical. (26-27)

Whereas Aristotle did not develop a structural ranking of human "races," he presented the following geo-cultural scheme to further the notion that the Greeks were naturally suited to rule over all others.

The races that live in the cold regions and those of Europe are full of courage and passion but somewhat lacking in skill and brain-power; for this reason, while remaining generally independent, they lack political cohesion and the ability to rule over others. On the other hand the Asiatic races have both brains and skill but are lacking in courage and will-power; so they have remained enslaved
and subject. The Hellenic race, occupying a mid-position geographically, has a measure of both. Hence it continues to be free, to have the best political institutions, and to be capable of ruling all others, given a single constitution. (269)

It was only the Greek (men) who were capable of establishing a polis governed by rational and just means; all others were characterized by their tyrannical rule.

While it is clear that Aristotle did participate in the development of the Greek notion of the barbaric Other, Dossa's suggestion that "in Aristotle's hands, political philosophy yielded a theory of the West and a theory of the Orient" is not supported by a close reading of The Politics. Whereas the Greeks seemed to have been concerned with defining themselves in opposition to all other "barbarians," the notion of a Europe and that of an Orient in binary opposition does not appear to have emerged until later.

The decline of the Roman Empire as a result of the barbarian invasions had the paradoxical effect of incorporating barbarian ways into Roman and Mediterranean culture, Romania; whereas, [Henri] Pirenne argues, the consequence of the Islamic invasions beginning in the seventh century was to move the center of European culture away from the Mediterranean, which was then an Arab province, and towards the North. (Said, 1978: 71)

The evolution of the contemporary concept of "the West" underwent several stages that included the schism of the Christian Church between its eastern and western branches, the emergence of Islam in the Middle East, and later, the establishment of communism in Eastern Europe. "The East" was conceptualized as the Other by Western Europeans in each of these cases; it was defined as being different and the place from which threats to "the West" seemed to emerge. As
Edward Said has asserted, the positing of "an Orient" by Orientalism "has less to do with the Orient than it does with 'our' world" (1978: 12). Neither "the West" nor "the Orient" exist as absolute categories but are conceptualized in relation to each other. They are not clearly demarcated or stagnant geographical regions of the world, both being continually redefined by history and ideology.

Edward Said traces the emergence of Orientalist attitudes towards Muslim societies to the time when Europe began to see itself in the Middle Ages as "one great Christian community" (Said, 1978: 71). From the works of Dante Alighieri, Peter the Venerable, Guibert of Nogent, Roger Bacon, William of Tripoli, Burchard of Mount Syon, and Martin Luther as well as in the Poema del Cid and the Chanson de Roland, there developed the image of the Muslim as the Other. The latter became a standard figure in medieval Europe's dramaturgy of good and evil. An "imaginative geography" emerged, says Said, consisting of a series of tropes whose relationship to the actual Orient was like that of stylized costumes to characters in a play (ibid). The Muslims portrayed in this literature were not meant to be truly representative figures but personifications of the Other.

However, "Islam" was not only was an ideological but a geopolitical problem as well:

It lay uneasily close to Christianity, geographically and culturally. It drew on Judeo-Hellenic traditions, it borrowed creatively from Christianity, it could boast of unrivalled military and political successes. Nor was this all. The Islamic lands sit adjacent to and even on top of the Biblical lands; moreover, the heart of the Islamic domain has always been the region closest to Europe, what has been called the Near Orient or Near East. Arabic and Hebrew are
Semitic languages, and together they dispose and redispone of material that is urgently important to Christianity. (Ibid: 74)

At the eve of the project of global colonization, the Muslim realm stood as a rival that occupied parts of Europe and barred overland access to the fabled riches of India and China. Although India and parts of the Far East were vanquished in the 18th century, the Middle East remained unconquered until Napoleon's arrival in Egypt in 1798. In the meantime, European travellers such as Anquetil-Duperron and William Jones had begun the systematic study of Orientals, including Muslims. With this began to grow the body of Orientalist literature that described the Orient through the eyes of the European colonialist.

Orientalism and Colonialism

According to Said, Napoleon's ambition to conquer Egypt was shaped by the writings of Orientalists, some of whom he took along with him as advisers, interpreters and administrators. This was a historic step in the development of Orientalism in its relation to colonialism, and was symbolized following Napoleon's invasion by the production of the encyclopedic, twenty-three volume Description de l'Égypte by scholars of the Institut de France.

After Napoleon ... the very language of Orientalism changed radically. Its descriptive realism was upgraded and became not merely a style of representation but a language, indeed a means of creation ... the Orient was reconstructed, reassembled, crafted, in short, born out of the Orientalists' efforts. The Description became the master type of all further efforts to bring the Orient closer to Europe, thereafter to absorb it entirely and - centrally important - to cancel, or at least subdue and reduce, its strangeness and, in the
case of Islam, its hostility. For the Islamic Orient would henceforth appear as a category denoting the Orientalists' power and not the Islamic people as humans nor their history as history. (Said, 1978: 87)

One part of the world came to study another in such an intensive manner as probably had never happened before. European social scientists, archaeologists, historians, biblical scholars, travellers, and colonial administrators streamed out to the East digging, searching, measuring, recording, inventing. The medieval lore about the Orient was reframed into the rationalism engendered by the Enlightenment. Within the secularized structures, the biblical worldview was reshaped by an empirically more accurate picture. Muhammad was not now to be viewed as "a diabolical miscreant" but as a historical figure, and the primary division between the Christian and the non-Christian communities was replaced by that which factored in "race, color, origin, temperament, character, and types" (120).

Nevertheless, most of this work was based on fundamental preconceptions of what "the Orient" stood for. Medieval beliefs about the Oriental were re-clothed in rationalist garb. Each generation of Orientalist writers was influenced by previous ones, absorbing the biases and prejudices that went back centuries. Said suggests that this created a "textual attitude" which lent greater credence to written material about the subject matter than to actual experiences. What is more, certain strongly-held and oft-repeated beliefs about the Orient functioned as self-fulfilling prophecies.
A text purporting to contain knowledge about something actual ... is not easily dismissed. Expertise is ascribed to it. The authority of academics, institutions, and governments can accrue to it, surrounding it with still greater prestige than its practical successes warrant. Most important, such texts can create not only knowledge but also the very reality they appear to describe. In time such knowledge and reality produce a tradition, or what Michel Foucault calls a discourse, whose material presence or weight, not the originality of a given author, is really responsible for the texts produced out of it. (94)

Aided by the silence of the defeated Oriental, the received Orientalist wisdom gained the status of self-evident truth. In search of resources, markets and colonies, Europeans actually created in the Orient what Orientalist texts had constructed only in an imaginary sense. The subdued Oriental, overwhelmed by Occidental technology and the violent destruction of her/his own social, economic and technological infrastructures, generally played out the role of the passive, intellectually backward native that Orientalism had scripted for her/him. Whenever s/he rebelled, s/he was characterized as a deviant and then brutally crushed. This tragic scenario was repeated over and over again in the annals of European colonialism (Kieman, 1969; Worsely, 1984).

Said makes a distinction between "latent Orientalism" and "manifest Orientalism." The former was represented by the distillation of essential ideas about the Orient - its sensuality, its tendency to despotism, its aberrant mentality, its habits of inaccuracy, its backwardness - into a separate and unchallenged coherence; thus for a writer to use the word Oriental was a reference for the reader sufficient to identify a specific body of information about the Orient. This information seemed to be morally neutral and objectively valid; it seemed to have an epistemological status equal to that of historical chronology or
geographical location. In its most basic form, then, Oriental material could not really be violated by anyone's discoveries, nor did it seem ever to be revalued completely. (1978: 205)

The ongoing discoveries that formed part of "manifest Orientalism" were framed within the "almost unconscious positivity" of "latent Orientalism" (206). The latter seemed to carry within it the memories of the oldest Northern imaginaries of the Orient as essentially an alien, forbidding Other. Latent Orientalism provides the fields of meanings and the cognitive models on which integration propagandists shape their discourses about "Islam."

Orientalism became very much part of the colonial and foreign policy-making apparatus of Northern powers as the expertise of Orientalists was harnessed for adventures abroad. The involvements of Britain, France, Russia, the Netherlands and Italy in the Middle East, Africa, Central Asia, South Asia and South-East Asia were reflected by the growing number of university departments devoted to the study of these regions and their inhabitants. Their graduates also filled administrative posts in the mother countries and in the colonies, bringing with them the received wisdom of latent Orientalism.

There were two principal methods by which Orientalism delivered the Orient to the West in the early twentieth century. One was by means of the disseminative capacities of modern learning, its diffusive apparatus in the learned professions, the universities, the professional societies, the explorational and geographical organizations, the publishing industry. All these ... built upon the prestigious authority of the pioneering scholars, travellers, and poets, whose cumulative vision had shaped a quintessential Orient ... So far as anyone wishing to make a statement of any consequence about the Orient was concerned, latent Orientalism supplied him with an enunciative capacity that could be used, or
rather mobilized, and turned into sensible discourse for the concrete occasion at hand... But like all enunciative capacities and the discourses they enable, latent Orientalism was profoundly conservative - dedicated, that is, to its self-preservation. Transmitted from one generation to another, it was part of the culture, as much a language about a part of reality as geometry or physics. Orientalism was able to survive revolutions, world wars, and the literal dismemberment of empires. (222)

Orientalism thus continues to flourish in the era of neo-colonialism in which Northern powers no longer administer colonies but nevertheless manipulate the destinies of Southern countries through global economic and communications structures. Said maintains that the older patterns of Orientalist discourses sustain their hold over the contemporary study of the Orient and continue to shape Northern conceptions about "Islam" and Muslims.

What is remarkable is not that there should be a study of one culture by another but the overwhelming magnitude of the Orientalist enterprise.

The very presence of a "field" such as Orientalism, with no corresponding equivalent in the Orient itself, suggests the relative strength of Orient and Occident. (204)

Even today there is not a full-blown "Occidentalism" in the Orient that could serve as a reciprocal counterpart to Orientalism. The rationalization for this is attempted by Gustave von Grunebaum, a leading European Orientalist who, like his fellows such as Hamilton Gibb and Bernard Lewis, crossed the Atlantic to America in the mid 20th century:

It is essential to realize that Muslim civilization is a cultural entity that does not share our primary assumptions. It is not vitally interested in the structured study of other cultures, either as an end in itself or as a means towards clearer understanding of its own
character and history. If this observation were to be valid merely for contemporary Islam, one might be inclined to connect it with the profoundly disturbed state of Islam, which does not permit it to look beyond itself unless forced to do so. But as it is valid for the past as well, one may perhaps seek to connect it with the basic anti-humanism of this (Islamic) civilization, that is, the determined refusal to accept man to any extent whatever as the arbiter or the measure of things, and the tendency to be satisfied with the truth as the description of mental structures, or in other worlds, with psychological truths. (von Grunebaum, 1964: 55)

To Said such polemical writing is typical of the "essentially reductive, negative generalizations" (1978: 296) that characterizes much of the Orientalist corpus.

Von Grunebaum's arguments seem to indicate that whereas Orientalists can interpret the East within the legitimacy of their academic discipline, Easterners, lacking intellectual inclination or tradition, have to be satisfied with analyses of the Occident carried out by Occidentals themselves. This is true not only in academia but in the domain that has a more ubiquitous presence in the contemporary world: the mass media. Journalists "raid the orientalist cupboard for alimentation, picking up old prejudices and scatological bits of information" (A. Ahmed, 1992: 186).

The dominance of the North-based transnational news agencies and the communications structures built by colonialism, supporting the hegemony of the Orientalist discourses, produce a largely one-sided view of the world.

In Covering Islam (1981) Said scrutinizes the Northern mass media's constructions of Muslim societies. He attempts to demonstrate how events such as the oil crisis in the mid-1970s and the overthrow of the staunch American ally in the Middle East, the Shah of Iran, by Islamist militants were viewed by journalists
within Orientalist perspectives that had roots in medieval Europe. The foreign correspondents who report on Muslim countries are generally ill-equipped to provide adequate understanding of current events in those countries. Their work tends to be ethnocentric and reductive, and their history of interaction with the highly diverse Islamic peoples has been shaped recently only by oil and by rulers (like the ex-shah) whose alliance with the United States brings the limited, badly underexamined rewards of "modernization" and "anticommunism" (101).

Additionally, the "experts" from whom the mass media seek information and analysis are themselves often the products of Orientalist institutions. "Islam" becomes a timeless entity in much of the reporting, which is replete with stereotypical generalizations and clichés. Phrases such as "the Islamic mindset," "the crescent of crisis," and "the Shi'ite penchant for martyrdom" pose as explanations for events that most journalists do not bother to explore in a meaningful way. Said sees the Northern, particularly the American, media taking a consensual approach towards those Muslim societies which are ideologically aligned with Northern governments' foreign policies. He does not view the consensual process as being conscious and deliberate but as operating within a dominant field of meanings:

The simplest and, I think, the most accurate way of characterizing it is to say that it sets limits and maintains pressures. It does not dictate content, and it does not mechanically reflect a certain class or economic groups' interests. We must think of it as drawing invisible lines beyond which a reporter or commentator does not feel it necessary to go... When the American hostages were seized and held in Teheran, the consensus immediately came into play,
decreeing more or less that only what took place concerning the hostages was important about Iran; the rest of the country, its political processes, its daily life, its personalities, its geography and history, were eminently ignorable: Iran and the Iranian people were defined in terms of whether they were for or against the United States. (50)

Muslim societies are thus presented in terms of how they relate to the North; the worldviews and the policies which they consider to be most appropriate for their development are frequently considered irrelevant. Just as academic Orientalism's textual attitude produced sets of self-evident truths about the Orient, the Northern mass media's dominant discourses on "Islam" continue to be marked by many unsubstantiated impressions that recur with predictable regularity in their daily output.

Robert Young has criticized Said for overestimating the hegemony of the dominance of Orientalist discourses (1990: 135-40). Orientalism tends to condemn almost all Northern discourses on the Orient without attempting to provide suggestions for an alternative approach. 5

By assuming that any 'method' must be univocal and totalizing, his own anti-method simply takes up the opposite pole of the antagonistic dialectic he has created. As we might expect, this means that he then inevitably acts out and repeats at a textual level the dualistic structures from which he is unable to free himself. (136)

In this, Young sees Said merely adopting what I have defined as an oppositional discourse, which is often applied by theorists who consciously or unconsciously perpetuate some of the basic structures and assumptions of the systems which they oppose. The former favours the Derridean mode of Homi Bhabha and Gayatri
Chakravorty Spivak, who have also written extensively about dominant Northern discourses on the South. They "demonstrate the possibility of providing a critique in which both theory and detailed historical material can be inflected towards an inversion of the dominant structures of knowledge and power without simply reproducing them" (173).

The approach adopted in the present study, which views dominant discourses as being in continual struggle with oppositional and alternative discourses, also seeks to overcome the problems associated with overemphasizing the hegemony of dominant discourses. While this dissertation sees Orientalism as largely being the vehicle for dominant Northern discourses on "Islam," it is not viewed as a monolithic instrument of hegemonic constructions. Even though Orientalism does generally adhere to a fundamental dichotomy between the Occident and the Orient, there have always been within it some strands of oppositional discourse and a few of alternative ideas about the relationship between Christian European and Muslim societies. For example, the phenomenological approaches of Louis Massignon, Henri Corbin and Fritjof Schuon, who extensively studied Muslim spiritual traditions, went against the rationalist grain of the Orientalist discourses more supportive of an imperialistic viewpoint. Said does acknowledge the value of such alternative approaches. He isolates Louis Massignon for attempting a non-hegemonic approach to "Islam" (1983: 282-89).
However, even as Said argues against manichean tendencies in scholarship, he constructs in *The World, the Text and the Critic* (1983) a dichotomy between what he calls "secular criticism," characterized by "its suspicion of totalizing concepts" (29) and "religious criticism," which is "subservient to authority" (291). Said feels perturbed by the likes of René Girard who have attempted to broaden the parameters of scholarly inquiry beyond the purely rationalistic, and from whose work the present study has sought to understand issues such as myth and violence in contemporary society. Notwithstanding these divergences with Said's epistemological preferences, this dissertation study holds his opus as providing an important basis for further elaboration on the subject of the dominant Northern discourses on Muslims. Compared to the work of other postcolonial theorists, his specific analyses of Western imaginaries about "Islam" is of particular value to this thesis.

**Generative Stereotypes of Muslims**

One central theme emerges from Edward Said's writings: that "Islam" is often manipulated to mean what the particular source wants it to mean. "Islam," "Islamic," "Muslim," "Muslim fundamentalist," "Islamic radicals," "Islamic terrorist" etc. are generally used in undefined manners by Northern observers, particularly journalists, who often portray the one billion Muslims of the world as a monolith. Even though there are significant amounts of coverage about matters "Islamic," no cohesive picture of "Islam" ever seems to appear. Endless streams of
episodic "facts" are reported about events in the Muslim world, but little attempt is made to impart an understanding of the considerable degree of diversity among the religion's adherents. This ambiguity combined with the media consumer's unlimited capacity to forget the details of previous reportage (Ellul, 1969: 47) leaves the integration propagandist free to manipulate the meaning of "Islam" according to her/his current needs. "Islamic" and "Muslim" come to be charged with negative meanings and become what Gordon Allport described as "labels of primary potency" which "act like shrieking sirens, deafening us to all finer discriminations that we might otherwise perceive" (1958: 175).

Certain "essential thematic clusters" in the media coverage of the Middle East can be identified, according to Said:

One. The pervasive presence of generally Middle Eastern, more particularly Arab and/or Islamic, terrorism, Arab or Islamic terrorist states and groups, as well as a "terrorist network" comprising Arab and Islamic groups and states ... Terrorism here is most often characterized as congenital, not as having any foundation in grievances, prior violence, or continuing conflicts.

Two. The rise of Islamic and Muslim fundamentalism, usually but not always Shi'i, associated with such names as Khomeini, Qadhafi, Hizbullah, as well as, to coin a phrase, "the return of Islam."

Three. The Middle East as a place whose violent and incomprehensible events are routinely referred back to a distant past full of "ancient" tribal, religious, or ethnic hatreds.

Four. The Middle East as a contested site in which "our" side is represented by the civilized and democratic West, the United States, and Israel. Sometimes Turkey is included here, most often not.
The Middle East as a locale for the re-emergence of a virulent quasi-European (i.e. Nazi) type of anti-Semitism.

The Middle East as the *fons en origo*, the hatching ground, of the gratuitous evils of the PLO...
(MESA, 1987: 88-89)

While some of these themes may be receiving less emphasis since Said made these remarks at a conference in 1986, they generally reflect the ways in which coverage of the Muslim world is framed by Northern journalists.

Robert L. Ivie's work in isolating the generative structures (topoi) in his study of "Images of Savagery in American Justifications for War" (1990) helps in understanding how some basic stereotypes can be reproduced with variations over a long period of time to fulfil the same underlying purpose. While Ivie looked at the remarkable consistency of American characterizations of the different military enemies that the US faced over two centuries, his method can be applied here to the images that peoples of European origins have had of Muslims over the last millennium. According to Ivie, "The topoi, metaphorically speaking, are a 'reservoir' of ideas or core images from which specific rhetoric statements can be generated" (281). Feminist theorist and cultural critic bell hooks makes a strong case for showing how contemporary American mass media representations of Black women hark back to "images of black female sexuality which were part of the cultural apparatus of 19th-century racism" (1992: 62). She demonstrates the manners in which present-day perceptions continue to be formed by certain basic stereotypes about Black women that have been part of dominant racial discourses.
for over a century. Such topoi enable dominant groups sustain the ideological legitimization of hierarchical societal structures that put every individual in his or her "place."

A series of cognitive macrostructures are operative in the formation of imaginaries about specific groups of people. The archetypal myth of the Other forms the basis for topoi (core images/primary stereotypes) about her/him. Such longer-term macrostructures, which are held in collective memories, give rise to variations that are generated according to changes in time and place. The proliferation of images based on the topoi about the Other, inform the cognitive scripts, models, and frames that guide everyday interactions with her/him.

According to Tuen van Dijk, scripts "contain all we know in our culture about a specific stereotypical type of episode" (1988: 13): they tell us how to behave in particular situations. Cognitive models operate as the referential bases of interpretation and are essential in making textual accounts involving specific actors seem coherent (ibid: 22). Integration propagandists use dominant models to frame a series of occurrences; Gaye Tuchman has shown how such framing transforms "occurrences and happenings (strips of the everyday world) into defined events" (1978: 7; also see Goffman, 1974: 10-11). Therefore, in order for a journalist's account to make sense to its audience, both have to subscribe to a general set of cognitive macrostructures that form their particular culture's ways of interpreting the world.
Attempts have been made to isolate specific topoi that characterize dominant Northern representations of the Muslim world. According to Jack Shaheen, television tends to perpetuate four primary stereotypes about Arabs:

- they are all fabulously wealthy;
- they are barbaric and uncultured;
- they are sex maniacs with a penchant for white slavery; and they revel in acts of terrorism (1984: 4)

Such core images have been the bases for dominant Northern perceptions of Muslims since the Middle Ages when they were viewed as being "war-mongers," "luxury lovers" and "sex-maniacs" (Kassis, 1992: 261). Although these topoi may vary from time to time in emphasis and in relation to the particular Muslim groups to which they have been applied (Simon, 1989: 34-53), they remain the most resilient of Northern images about Muslims. Variations of the four topoi of Muslims having fabulous but undeserved wealth (they have not "earned" it), being barbaric and regressive, indulging in sexual excess, and the most persistent image of "the violent Muslim" have not only been reproduced in newspapers and television, but generally appear as the representations of the Muslim Other in art (Nochlin, 1989; Kabbani, 1986), music (Michalak, 1984), literature (Orfalea, 1988; Briemberg, 1986; Said, 1978), school textbooks (Hayani, 1994; Abu-Laban, 1975; al-Qazzaz, 1975), public discourse (Khan, 1990) and in computerized formats.

These generic notions about "Islam," which emerged as the basic frames in the European Christian polemic against the "saracens," often discursively interlink with each other in contemporary Northern narratives about Muslims. The image of Arab Muslims converting by "the sword of Islam" those whom they conquered
is a popular image in the North. Out of the scores of Muslim caliphs and sultans, the few despots who persecuted non-Muslims as well as Muslim sectarians are often presented as being typical (Hentsch, 1992). Violence has come to be linked with the very nature of "Islam" as a religion and of Muslims as its adherents. This image intermingles with that of Arabs as lovers of luxury with the implication that their wealth is an indication of their avarice and is usually obtained through illicit means. Linked to the desire for worldly pleasures are the notions of sloth and greed as well as of lust for sexual and political power. Technological and cultural differences between Muslim and Northern societies are often viewed as evidence of barbarism and intellectual backwardness. Personifications of these topoi are frequently to be found in figures such as the cruel, barbaric and lascivious but fabulously wealthy sheikh, who is a common figure in Northern representations of Muslims (Michalak, 1984).

Inherent in these imaginaries is the idea of exoticism: the "exotic East" evokes simultaneous but contradictory feelings of attraction and revulsion, of fascination and terror; it invites prurient indulgence, but is to be kept at a distance. Shakespeare's Othello seems to imply that a violent end awaits European women who choose to consort with such men as the "Black Moor": the two topoi of lust and greed come together here in the notion of sexual jealousy, which ultimately explodes into violent rage. The immense popularity in Europe and North America of the "Arabian Nights" (out of all the literature produced by the Arab world), the depictions of "exotic" Muslims in alternatively violent or languorous poses by
artists such as Eugène Delacroix and Jean-Léon Gérôme, the early Hollywood production of "The Sheik" (1921) followed by the numerous films of this genre, and the portrayal of "oil sheikhs" by editorial cartoonists all illustrate, despite their internal contradictions, the seeming inseparability of the images of "Sensuality, promise, terror, sublimity, idyllic pleasure, intense energy" (Said, 1978: 118) in Northern ideas about the Muslim Other.

Central to the ideological construction in the Middle Ages of the "Islam" that had to be defeated was the single-minded assault on the character of the founder of the religion himself. At the basis of the European image of Muhammad were contrasts with the ascetic picture of Christ: not only was the Arab prophet married, he was also a ruler and led armies into battles. In the eyes of many medieval Christians this seemed not only to deny his holiness but also to confirm his sinfulness as well as the fraudulent nature of his prophethood. To them Muhammad seemed to be the anti-thesis of what Christ was supposed to stand for; indeed, for some he became the Antichrist (Daniel, 1960: 280). One of the more ironic illustrations of this trend was the use by Dante Alighieri of Islamic eschatology, derived from the Arabo-Spanish narratives of the Muhammad's *Miraj* (heavenly ascent), in developing the structure of his *Divine Comedy*⁸: despite this literary debt to the Islamic prophet, Dante cast him into the nether extremities of the Inferno.

Even as contact with the highly advanced medieval Muslim civilization was enabling Europe to emerge out of its Dark Ages (Schacht and Bosworth, 1979),
the vituperation against the founder of Islam seemed to increase. Norman Daniel, whose work stands as one of the most detailed studies of this subject, isolates "three marks of Muhammad's life" (1960: 107) in European Christian polemical writing. These were

the violence and force with which he imposed his religion; the salacity and laxness with which he bribed followers whom he did not compel; and finally his evident humanity, which it was constantly believed to be necessary to prove, although no Muslim denied it, or even wished to deny. (Ibid)

We have in these impressions of the Islamic prophet the topoi with which "Islam" is characterized in dominant Northern discourses: violence, a "bad" sexuality, and a lack of ethics in worldly dealings. These became the primary stereotypes within which the actions of Muslims were largely placed by Northern ideologues. Whereas the image of Muslims as "fabulously (and undeservedly) wealthy" (Shaheen, 1984: 4) does not appear to have been applied in a systematic way to Muhammad, the seeds of this stereotype appear to be present in his perceived worldliness.

The greatest threat from "Islam" in the view of Christian Europe seemed to lie not in the differences but rather in the actual similarities of Muhammad's message to the monotheistic Judeo-Christian tradition (Said, 1978: 72). Whereas the Koran repudiated the concept of the godliness of Jesus, it revered him as a major figure in the series of prophets in which Muhammad was considered the final and most important. The Church had reason in seeing "Islam" as an ideological rival, since Muslims believed their religion to be the culmination of the tradition of
Abraham, Moses and Jesus. Some Christian observers tended to view the religion that Muhammad founded as one of the many heresies that abounded in the Middle Ages. Its prophet was initially presented as, among other things, a Roman Catholic cardinal who, "thwarted in his ambition to become Pope, revolted, fled to Arabia and there founded a church of his own" (Hourani, 1974: 11). While the Enlightenment produced some less polemical discussions of the life of Muhammad by writers such as Thomas Carlyle, others like Voltaire continued to attack the prophet of "Islam" for being violent, salacious and irrational (Daniel, 1960: 288-294). Even as late as the twentieth century a biography, which was "strongly recommended" by Islamicists, could carry this summation:

In spite of everything that can be said in defence of Mohammed's religious integrity and his loyalty to his call, his endurance, his liberality, and his generosity, we are not doing the Prophet of Islam an injustice when we conclude that his moral personality does not stand upon the same level with his other endowments; and indeed, not even upon the same level with his religious endowments. But if we would be fair to him we must not forget that, consciously or unconsciously, we Christians are inclined to compare Mohammed with the unsurpassed and exalted figure whom we meet in the Gospels, and that we cannot avoid seeing his historical personality against the background of the perfect moral ideal to which the faith of his followers tried to exalt him. And when it is measured by such a standard, what personality is not found wanting.9

It appears that to this century the humanity of Muhammad has continued to be compared with the perceived divinity of Jesus. What is found lacking in the morality of the prophet of "Islam" is also present in the characterizations of his followers: violence, lust, avarice, and barbarism have become the archetypal sins of Muslims in their dealings with Northerners (see Hoffer, 1980).
These features continue today to be integral to dominant Northern discourses on "Islam." Edward Said seeks to demonstrate how Northern topoi about "Islam" are used in an ideological manner by analyzing Bernard Lewis's description of Muslim notions regarding revolution (*thawra*):

Lewis's association of *thawra* with a camel rising and generally with excitement (and not with a struggle on behalf of values) hints much more broadly than is usual for him that the Arab is scarcely more than a neurotic sexual being. Each of the words or phrases he uses to describe revolution is tinged with sexuality: *stirred, excited, rising up*. But for the most part it is a "bad" sexuality he ascribes to the Arab. In the end, since Arabs are really not equipped for serious action, their sexual excitement is no more noble than a camel's rising up. Instead of revolution there is sedition, setting up a petty sovereignty, and more excitement, which is as much as saying that instead of copulation the Arab can only achieve foreplay, masturbation, coitus interruptus. These, I think, are Lewis's implications, no matter how innocent his air of learning, or parlorlike his language. For since he is so sensitive to the nuances of words, he must be aware that his words have nuances as well. (1978: 315-16)

Even if Said can justifiably be accused of overinterpreting Lewis, one would expect this leading Orientalist to know that in popular Northern culture dromedarian analogies are common currency in racist insults against Arabs. According to Said, the implications here are that while the irrational Arab engages in violence, he is motivated more by lust for power than by serious political ideals; however, even this lust is hampered by a characteristic sloth that impedes successful completion of the Arab's revolutionary project. Although Lewis (1982: 51) dismissed Said's reading, it is interesting to note that he did not re-use the
metaphor of a camel rising for the description of *thawra* in a later work on *The Political Language of Islam* (1988: 96).

Despite the numerous examples of Orientalist writing that exhibit clearly ideological tendencies, it would be a serious mistake to dismiss all Orientalist scholarship as being flawed in this manner. Even Said acknowledges the value of the contributions of a number of Orientalists to a better understanding of "Islam." However, dominant Orientalist discourses do appear to have demonstrated an imperialist undertone that has aided the colonization process and the contemporary hegemony over the Orient. The topoi of violence, lust, avarice, and barbarism, which have appeared in Northern discourses about "Islam" for over a millennium, continue to characterize dominant present-day imaginaries about Muslims. Said's work is important in that it has brought to light the systematic and comprehensive ways in which dominant Orientalist discourses have operated. For studies such as the present one, it provides the framework within which to place a viable critique of contemporary Northern discourses about Muslims. It also allows for an exploration of the alternatives that can be considered for a less confrontationary mode of communication between the two civilizations.

**Notes**


2. Said refers particularly to Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) and *Discipline and Punish* (1979).

3. Also see Akbar S. Ahmed's postmodernist analysis of this issue (1992: 222-65).
4. Said does, however, makes a distinction here between American correspondents, who are moved around from one "hot spot" to another and their European counterparts, some of whom tend to remain in the region for relatively long periods and are familiar with local languages (1981: 102).

5. Said does seem to be making an attempt to suggest alternative approaches in more recent publications (1989; 1993).

6. See Keen (1986) for a discussion on the functional value of the images of the Other.

7. For example, a documentary produced by the UK-based Granada television in the late 1980s and a cover story in the June 15, 1992 of Time magazine both had this phrase as their titles.

8. This thesis was originally suggested by the Spanish scholar Asin Palacios. An abridged English translation of Palacios's work appears in Sunderland (1926).

9. Andrae (1960: 191). This book was published in German in 1932 and later translated into English, Spanish and Italian. The back cover of the 1960 Harper and Row edition cites from, among others, a review by Arthur Jeffrey, a leading Islamicist: "As an introductory book on Mohammed, it is by far the best there is. Each year I recommend it strongly, and wish every student had his own copy to read and reread." It was a text for an Islamic studies course that I took at Columbia University in the mid-1970s.

10. Michalak (1984: 4). Barbara Amiel wrote in "At odds with Arabs," The Ottawa Sun: "all Arabia [sic] may be our enemy and we simply cannot go on arming equipping and encouraging any of these people ... Their warriors could revert to throwing camel dung rather than mustard gas at one another ... " (15/8/90: 11). A much-used North American racial slur against Arabs is "camel jockey."
Chapter 6
Violence and Lust
A Perennial Image

The ubiquity of "the violent Muslim" in Northern imaginaries is addressed in this chapter. This image was one of Christian Europe's primary topoi about "Islam," which have survived in dominant present-day Northern representations of Muslims. Violence, lust, avarice and barbarism appear in myriad variations, whose specific shapes keep changing but whose underlying bases remain the same. Older stereotypes such as the fabulously wealthy and despotic caliph, the fanatical warrior who sought to convert infidels by the sword, the lascivious sultan, the dim-witted commoner, and the submissive woman of the harem are mirrored in contemporary ones of the cruel Middle Eastern dictator, the ruthless and fanatical terrorist, the much-married and greedy oil sheikh, the superstitious and technologically incompetent worker, and the belly dancer as a woman of easy virtue. (What is critiqued here is not the existence of individuals with such characteristics, but their generalization to "Islam.") Despite the rise of secularism in the North, the cognitive models that developed over a millennium of conflict between the Christian and Muslim worlds seem to have remained as part of the cultural memory.1 While the opposition against the Muslim Other may not be overtly religious, the perceived threat of being overwhelmed by "Islam" is still very strong.

It is the topos of the violent Muslim that is most common of the dominant Northern images of "Islam." Violence interacts with the other three primary stereotypes of lust, avarice and barbarism. The latter characteristics can be
effectively portrayed by Northern propagandists as being expressed through violent behaviour. For example, Oriental rulers are generally depicted as having a number of wives, as people with insatiable appetites for wealth and power, and as capable of unspeakable savagery. Eugène Delacroix's painting *The Death of Sardanapalas* is a primary illustration of this stereotype: the macabre scene depicts a mass slaughter of naked (White) women in a bedchamber by what appear to be (dark-skinned) bandits, as the Oriental master himself watches dispassionately, reclining on his luxurious bed.

The violence of the narrative is linked with eroticism; indeed, the female bodies in the throes of death are made to take on the positions of languor, of sexual abandon. Their dying becomes exotic spectacle, voyeuristically observed by both Sardanapalas and the [European] onlooker. The scene yields an opulence of gems (the women are all heavily bejewelled: they wear bracelets, ankle bracelets, necklaces, tiaras, rings, earrings) and of bodies. The opulence of the East is manifested in these painted gems. (Kabbani, 1986: 75-76)

This is only one among many other Romantic paintings which almost obsessively construct the East as essentially characterized by violent activity (ibid, 1986: 74-80). Various other media in other periods have also reiterated this theme.

Reeva S. Simon (1989) has traced portrayals of Middle Eastern characters in British and American crime fiction from 1916 to the 1980s, indicating how - while the images of Arabs or Turks may change depending on the current political circumstances - the topos of the violent Muslim remains irrepresseible (also see Orfalea, 1988).
This perennial Western fear, that of a resurgent Islam, is part of the Western historical memory. The sword-wielding Muslim thundering across the Straits of Gibraltar or laying siege to Vienna, the Old Man of the Mountain's Assassins high on drugs launched to kill political leaders, white slavers, and Barbary pirates have been reincarnated as plane hijackers, embassy bombers, and nefarious creators of long gas lines. In the fiction of the "paranoid" and "vicious" categories, the conspiracy, the hero, and the villain are basic elements for thriller/spy novel success. One of the most popular conspiracies, the Islamic threat, has been a plot motif threaded throughout crime fiction since John Buchan's *Greenmantle* (1916). (52-53)

This tendency seems to be intensifying with the darker drawings of Muslim characters by novelists: in the millennialist *The Lord of the Last Days: Visions of the Year 1000* by Homero Aridjis (1995), Christians battle with Muslims, who appear in the guise of the Antichrist. Not only does the representation of the violent Muslim serve a propagandic purpose, it is also highly profitable. The basic social myth of the Other, which allows the endowment of a range of negative characteristics to the perceived rival (Ivie, 1980: 280), is superimposed upon the Muslim enemy whose evil status has been validated by the vast repertoire of the negative images s/he has acquired in Northern discourses over the last 14 centuries. As a result, the Muslim's depiction as a villain carries a high level of plausibility in cultural entertainment that portrays the struggles of the good against the bad.

Apart from painters and writers of fiction, the utility of presenting Muslims in negative ways has been exploited extensively by producers of films, television dramas, advertising, comics, and toys.² Commercial and ideological
purposes dovetail neatly in artifacts that exploit the basic stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims.

Viciously anti-Arab prejudices are moulded to serve contemporary imperial politics: like the Coleco children's toy Rambo and his enemy "Nomad" with swarthy features, unmistakable head-dress, and Arabic writing on his cloak. The packaging tells us: "The desert is the country of the treacherous soldier Nomad. He is as unreliable as the sand, a cold as the nights and as dangerous as the deadly scorpions that live there. His family is a gang of assassins and wandering thieves. They are men without honour, who use their knowledge of the desert to attack innocent villages ..."³

Children are thus socialized into identifying the Other in the form of an Arab or Muslim. Ritual "fights" can be staged in play between the "good guy" who is the representation of the Northern technological civilization with the "bad guy" who comes from a backward desert land (see Barthes, 1973: 23-25; 53). Television cartoons also frequently have characters with cultural traits that are viewed as being "Arab."

Children often see their heroes defeat lame-brained Arabs on magic carpets in cartoons with an Arabian Nights setting. Their knightly actions subdue monstrous genies, crush corrupt rulers, and liberate enslaved maidens. (Shaheen, 1984: 24)

The ubiquity of such cultural constructions in various media serve continually to reinforce images of Muslims as violent, lustful, greedy and barbaric.

One poll of American attitudes towards Arabs, conducted in the early 1980s, elicited the responses, "anti-American," "anti-Christian," "cunning," "unfriendly," and "warlike" (ibid: 7), and another one in 1994 poll received around 40 per cent agreement on the statement: "Muslims belong to a religion that
condones or supports terrorism." Two surveys inquiring about Canadians' comfort levels in their relations with various groups in the country placed Muslims near the bottom of the lists (Angus Reid, 1992: 51; Decima, 1993: 39-40). A study measuring the "social distance" of Australians to various groups placed Muslims the furthest (McAlister and Moore, 1988: 7-13). 80 percent in a British survey identified "Islam" as "the 'next' major threat after communism" (A. Ahmed, 1992: 37). Similar apprehensions about Muslims seemed also to have been indicated by a 1989 French poll asking the question "Which of the following countries appear to you today to be the most threatening to France?":

In response, 25 per cent said Iran, 21 per cent the USSR, and 14 per cent the Arab countries in general. More than half the respondents - 57 per cent to be exact - believed that one or more of the Muslim states are most threatening to France. Similar opinions can be found in the other countries of Western Europe. (Pipes, 1990: 29)

Vancouver teacher Mordecai Briemberg carried out a word association exercise in a senior high school history class: responses to "Arab" were "Oil. Rich clothes. Mercedes. Gold." Those to "Muslim" were "Cult. Black. Ayatollah. Palestinian. Barbarians. Terrorists." Such attitudes towards Muslims seem to predispose Northern populations be more receptive to propaganda campaigns such as that carried out during the Gulf War between the UN Coalition and Iraq. The seeming ease with which the image of a former client state of Western powers was turned into one of a diabolical enemy is remarkable (to be discussed in Chapters 11 and 12). As Jacques Ellul notes,
propaganda cannot create something out of nothing. It must attach itself to a feeling, an idea; it must build on a foundation already present in the individual. The conditioned reflex or a prior conditioned reflex. The myth does not expand helter-skelter; it must respond to a group of spontaneous beliefs. Action cannot be obtained unless it responds to a group of already established tendencies or attitudes stemming from the schools, the environment, the regime, the churches, and so on. (1969: 36)

Cultural conditioning carried out since childhood through a variety of media as well as personal discourse seems to have created a widely held fear and antipathy in the North towards the Muslim.

Violence, lust, undeserved wealth and barbarism appear in sources that display Northern imaginaries about Muslims. Apart from being regularly present in the news on "Islam," they are present in music, plays, films, advertising, television sitcoms and dramas, magazines, fiction, travel literature, educational materials, comics, toys, carnival and circus entertainment, as well as in other cultural forms (Karim, 1991; Anis, 1996). The four topoi appear repetitively and ubiquitously, thus affirming their supposed concreteness to audiences who largely lack the means to verify the truth of these images. Some Muslims do indeed exhibit such characteristics, but it would be grossly inaccurate to state that they are shared by significant proportions of the adherents of Islam. But over-exposure by the mass media of those who tend to confirm dominant stereotypes of Muslims and the simultaneous occultation of those who do not lends credibility to the topoi (A. Ahmed, 1992: 190-91).
The "classics" that depict the "Saracen" and the "Moor" as a threat to Christian civilization are parts of the lore absorbed even by atheist members of Northern technological society.

All the fears, animosities and suspicions are reflected, sometimes explicitly and sometimes by implication, in the contemporary Western writings (as indeed they are in the Arabic writings of the time), both prose and verse, lay and ecclesiastical. They therefore form part of the literary heritage of every educated European and are imbedded in the subject matter of his general reading. Of course, the modern European and American reader would generally dismiss with a smile as quaint any hostile references to the Moor or the Saracen. But he would be less than human if he does not at the same time admit into his subconscious a smaller or larger number of prejudices. One residue of these prejudices is the facility with which the word "oriental" is still pre-fixed to such words as "duplicity," "cruelty," "servility," and "despotism." (Khalidi, 1957: 15)

Socialization processes such as primary education form the basis of a person's construction of reality (Berger and Luckmann, 1967) and predisposes her/him to accept or reject characterizations of people and situations presented by various sources.

The "Islamic terrorist" has come to be a major figure in the typology of characters who perform in Northern dramaturges about Muslim societies. It does not appear to require much ideological effort to create such a role given the repertoire of Northern images arising from the topoi of the violent man of "Islam."

The terrorist activities of some Muslims also serve to strengthen the core image. For the Northern propagandist, the generative framework of the violent Muslim becomes the matrix upon which to base the portrayal of the careers of people as
distinct in character and in time as the prophet Muhammad, Saladin (Salah ud-Din), Tamerlane (Taimur Lang), Gamal Abdel Nasser, Muammar Qadhafi, Yasser Arafat, Abu Nidal, Ruhollah Khomeini, and Saddam Hussein. Elie Kedourie, a well-known Orientalist, stated in a magazine article on "Political Terror in the Muslim World": "the fact that political terrorism originating in the Muslim and the Arab world is constantly in the headlines must not obscure the perhaps more significant fact that this terrorism has an old history" (1987: 12). Since, according to the dominant Northern discourses on "Islam," the contemporary actions of Muslims can always be related to their "ancient' tribal, religious, or ethnic hatreds" (MESA, 1987: 89), it is logical for Kedourie to attempt to demonstrate the "Islamic" pedigree of contemporary "Muslim terrorists." He does this by relating that the "first political assassination to take place in Islam" was that of Ali, the cousin of the prophet Muhammad, in 661; that Hasan-i Sabbah in 11th and 12th-century Iran "may be considered as a foremost exponent of the theory and practice of terrorism"; that Jamal al-din Afghani, a 19th-century Muslim reformer "certainly believed in assassination"; that during the 1940s and 50s the Muslim Brethren in Egypt, the Fedayan-i Islam in Iran and a communist group in Algeria engaged in terrorism; that the successive presidents of Egypt Gamal Abdel Nasser and Anwar Sadat had either contemplated or carried out assassination as young army officers; that "the Palestine Liberation Organisation is the best-known body in the Muslim world to derive its doctrine and practice from a European model" of terrorism; that members of a Muslim group attempted
to kill president Assad of Syria and another one succeeded in assassinating Sadat in 1981; and why "Khomeini's Iran ... exemplifies the idea of a 'terrorist state'" (1987: 13). While it is considered ideologically coherent for Kedourie to weave various persons drawn from the history of Muslims into a fabric of "Islamic terrorism," a similar tracing of assassinations from Julius Caesar to John F. Kennedy to demonstrate violent tendencies in the ways that the North treats its leaders would be considered laughable.

Dominant international discourses on violence and dominant Northern discourses on "Islam" blend in creating the notion of "Islamic terrorism." The strong image of Muslims as being innately prone to violence and the dominant notion that "international violence" is only carried out by "Third World" states either against themselves or against Northern interests allow for the cultural constructions of "Islamic terrorism." The coalescence of these two discourses makes the terrorism carried out by Muslims the terrorism of the worst kind, because it is seen as being supported by a historical tradition of mindless violence and as opposing modern civilization with a barbaric irrationality. Kedourie's article opened with: "There is a prevalent (and justifiable) impression that an appreciable part of terrorist activities today originate, and frequently take place, in the world of Islam, and particularly in its Arab portion" (1987: 12). Such a view completely ignores the "wholesale terrorism" of Northern powers and their client states (Herman and Chomsky, 1979) and the structural violence of Northern-dominated international economic and cultural hegemony (Galtung, 1980; George,
It also implies that the religion of "Islam" supports, indeed encourages, the use of gratuitous violence.

**Jihad and Mujahidin**

The brutal repression by the regime of Saddam Hussein of various sections of the Iraqi population was rarely mentioned when it was allied with Western powers against Iran in the 1980s. This changed radically during its war with the United Nations Coalition in 1991, when Iraq was frequently referred to as a "terrorist state" and its actions were viewed within dominant discourses on violence and on "Islam." The figure of Saddam Hussein as the owner of clandestine weapons of mass destruction and a despot calling Muslims to jihad made him a focal point of the propaganda deriving from these discourses. A newspaper editorial stated:

> While we may be fighting a war in the Persian Gulf, Saddam Hussein and his followers are fighting a jihad. The difference is enormous. Jihad is an Arabic word meaning "holy war," and, indeed, it explains why Saddam's strategies may be unpredictable, even incomprehensible, and will be right until this conflict reaches its inevitable end: The defeat of Saddam Hussein. The concept of jihad has become the wild card in the Gulf War. It makes it impossible to understand fully the goals, aims and objectives of Saddam Hussein. Ordinary rules play no role in a jihad - only God's law as interpreted by those who believe in jihad.

The supposed inexplicability of jihad allows those going to war with Iraq to "name the problem," "legitimate a particular way of viewing" it, and assign
responsibility to particular military powers to deal with the problem (Robinson and Charron, 1989: 149; Gusfield, 1981). The integration propagandist does not acknowledge, indeed, s/he studiously disregards the divergent views of Muslims regarding jihad (discussed in Chapter 4). Dominant discourses on "Islam" and on violence make the task of constructing the Other and building consensus much easier, and audiences are willing to overlook the fact that it was Northern arms suppliers themselves that had enabled Saddam Hussein to become the "monster" determined to achieve regional hegemony (Friedman, 1993).

That the "good Muslims" on the side of the UN Coalition had also declared a jihad (Buruma, 1991: 9) seemed to be irrelevant to those propagandists who used Saddam Hussein’s supposed "Islamicness" to demonize him. Dominant Western discourses on "Islam" systematically tend to make distinctions between those Muslims allied to the West and those who are not. While the term mujahidin refers to people who carry out a jihad (see Martin, 1987: 59), it developed a generally positive connotation in the international mass media in the 1980s. "Our friends" among Muslim groups using violence in their struggles were referred to as "mujahidin"; conversely, others who used the same self-appellation and were "anti-Western" were generally not called "mujahidin" but tended to be shown as carrying out a "jihad." For example, the Afghani guerrillas who fought the communist government in Kabul and Soviet troops in the country as well as an Iranian Muslim guerrilla organization fighting against the ulama-led government in Tehran were called "mujahidin"; but the term "jihad" was frequently
emphasized in referring to Muslim groups in Egypt, Lebanon, and Kashmir fighting their respective national governments. Within this perspective, "jihad" has come to be equated with "Islamic terrorism," which most of the latter groups were portrayed as practising. Thus, the apparent ignorance among Northern observers about the relationships between particular words used in Muslim discourses has facilitated their propaganda about Muslim friends and foes.

A cover story by Benjamin R. Barber in *The Atlantic* magazine's pitted "jihad" and "McWorld" as the "two axial principles of our age," both of which were presented global threats to democracy. "McWorld" (derived from the worldwide reach of the fast food restaurant chain McDonald's) referred to the planet being increasingly integrated by technology, ecological concerns, communications, and commerce; "jihad" in its interpretation as "Islamic holy war" became the epitome of disorder and a trend towards the "retribalization" of the world (Barber, 1992: 53). Both forces were seen as destabilizing the sovereignty of the nation-state within which democracy could properly function. Operating within the myth of the Nation, the author romanticizes the nation-state and does not deal with its failure to integrate its component parts:

OPEC, the World Bank, the United Nations, the International Red Cross, the multinational corporation ... there are scores of institutions that reflect globalization. But they often appear as ineffective as the world's real actors: national states and, to an even greater degree, subnational factions in permanent rebellion against uniformity and integration - even the kind represented by universal law and justice. The headlines feature these players regularly: they are cultures, not religions; rebellious factions and dissenting minorities at war not just with globalism but with the traditional
nation-states. Kurds, Basques, Puerto Ricans, Ossetians, East Timoreans, Quebecois, the Catholics of Northern Ireland, Abkasians, Kurile Islander Japanese, the Zulus of Inkatha, Catalanians, Tamils, and, of course, Palestinians - people without countries, inhabiting nations not their own, seeking smaller worlds within borders that will seal them off from modernity. (Barber, 1992: 59-60)

Rebellions against the nation-state and globalization are automatically interpreted as manifesting opposition to modernity, and what better way to portray such regressive tendencies than through "jihad" - the "Islamic holy war."

Words like Shi'ite, ayatollah, fatwa and jihad, derived from the Muslim discourses, become "labels of primary potency" (Allport, 1958: 175) that are universalized to reflect all cultural tendencies that are perceived to be in a global war against progress.

In newsreels or newsphotos, the Arab is always shown in large numbers. No individuality, no personal characteristics or experiences. Most of the pictures represent mass rage and misery, or irrational (hence hopelessly eccentric) gestures. Lurking behind all of these images is the menace of jihad. Consequence: a fear that the Muslims (or Arabs) will take over the world. (Said, 1978: 287)

Frequently, images of large numbers of Muslims in communal prayer become illustrations for a "fundamentalist" threat. On the other hand, it was possible in positive, non-threatening renderings of "good Muslims" to include visuals of the anti-Soviet mujahidin praying because the guerillas operated in small units scattered in the Afghan countryside. Pictures of funerals of Palestinian or Lebanese "martyrs" usually depict masses of people, rather than close-ups of faces
- which are often portrayed in pictures of people grieving for Israeli victims of war or of terrorism.

The Islamist movement frequently tends to be presented in the mass media as a reduction of "Islam" in general. As Akbar Ahmed has notes,

The word 'fundamentalism' has come to mean ugly, intolerant and violent religious fanaticism in the Western media; it is also a code, sometimes subliminal, sometimes explicit, for Islam. If a Muslim admits to being a Muslim he is in danger of being labelled a fundamentalist; such is the power of the media. (1992: 15)

"Islamic" and "Muslim," which would refer to the entire religion, its institutions and adherents, are used mainly in conflictual contexts in headlines such as

"Islamic rioters demand freedom for arrested activists" (Globe and Mail, 18/10/94: A8), "Muslims hear Hamas sermon at riot scene" (Ottawa Citizen, 26/11/94: A9), "Islamic rebels create Algerian state of fear" (Ottawa Citizen, 19/11/94: B8), and "Risking the wrath of Islam" (Globe and Mail, 14/3/95: A8).

Newspapers also routinely speak of an "Islamic death threat" (Montreal Gazette, 24/3/94: D13), an "Islamic suicide mission" (Montreal Gazette, 22/10/94: B1), and an "Islamic powder keg" (Montreal Gazette, 16/3/93: B3) - using adjectives which Northern journalists would be loathe to attach to Christianity or Judaism.

This serves to demonize the entire faith as fanatical and present the militancy of particular sections of the worldwide Muslim community as a parody of the religion's entire body of adherents.

In dominant Northern discourses, religious belief (particularly those of "primitive" religions such as Islam) were supposed to be well in the process of
Illustration 1
The use of "Islam" and "Islamic" in headlines.
The radical origins of Islamic terror in Lebanon

Western envoys get Islamic death threat

JAKARTA (Reuters) -- Western embassies in Indonesia are taking extra security precautions because of threats to kill U.S., French, Italian and British citizens.

Islamic rebels create Algerian state of fear

Islamic suicide mission organizer threatens more violence: reports

Anti-Western rhetoric and impulses are part of the revolution reshaping the Muslim world. Yet they do not mean immediate hostility.

Islamic rioters demand freedom for arrested activists
being replaced by adherence to technological myths (Sharabi, 1966; Smith, 1970).

Often, even when referring to countries with Muslim majorities, headlines construct "Islam" as an alien element rearing its head and creating chaos in the particular society. A *Globe and Mail* headline of a small news item in its December 27, 1986 (A6) edition said, "Egyptian police, Moslems clash" - but the text explained that it was "Moslem militants" who fought with police, not, as it might appear from the headline, that representatives of the entire Muslim community in Egypt clashed with a non-Muslim police force. Another "kicker" in the June 14, 1990 (A18) issue of *The Toronto Star* stated, "Algerian Muslims seek power," although a sub-headline indicated that it was "fundamentalists" who were trying "to capitalize on [a] vote's success." Other headlines in *The Ottawa Citizen*, that seemed to echo seventh century history when Islam first emerged, declared "Spread of Islam likely to change Arab countries" (30/6/90: G10) and "Muslim tide sweeps reluctant Egypt toward Islam" (30/12/95: F7). The July 6, 1991 edition of the newspaper had an article titled "Islam revival: Political power spreading" (I7), which also turned out to be about "Muslim fundamentalists." Another headline in the *Citizen* on January 7, 1992 (D7) stated, "Religious hardliners confident Islam is just days away," thus turning the religion into an event; and on January 25, 1992 (A12), the paper's roundup of world news briefs had an item on Algeria titled "Muslims, armed forces clash at mosques."
Tuen van Dijk notes that headlines perform a key cognitive function in readers' interpretations of articles: they "guide, facilitate, and sometimes bias understanding of the rest of the news report" (1988: 24). With "Islam" repeatedly presented as a reduction of "Islamic fundamentalism," media consumers would tend to interpret the appearance of the name of the religion and its symbols in various contexts as signifying a fanatical, militant type of faith. This is consistent with Northern discourses' general manipulation of "Islam," which is frequently pressed into service by propaganda sources to help provide ideologically slanted explanations for a variety of issues concerning people of Muslim backgrounds (Said, 1978; 1981; Mansfield, 1980: 495-96).

Visual Signifiers

There have developed over the last decade a distinct, although not finite, set of visual signifiers (Barthes, 1973: 111-27) in the international mass media's imaginaries of "Islamic fundamentalism." These include the *chador/hijab/burqa* (full-length veil) and head scarves worn by some Muslim women and girls, the cloak and turban worn by Muslim *ulama*, the Arab head-dress and cloak, the figure and the face of Ayatollah Khomeini, people prostrating in Islamic prayer, a mass of people performing the *hajj* (pilgrimage) at Mecca, children at a Koranic school, domes of mosques, minarets, a crescent with a five-pointed star, Arabic or "Arabic-looking" writing, Arabesque designs, belly dancers, a scimitar, camels, and desert dunes. Illustrations in the print media and television stories on the
growth of "Muslim fundamentalism" usually display such images that communicate a vast amount of information without actually stating it. Roland Barthes shows how one photograph charged with symbolism can serve as affirmation of a broader ideological structure:

On the cover [of a magazine], a young Negro in a French uniform is saluting, with his eyes uplifted, probably fixed on a fold of the tricolour. All this is the meaning of the picture. But, whether naively or not, I see very well what it signifies to me: that France is a great Empire, that all her sons, without any colour discrimination, faithfully serve under her flag, and that there is no better answer to the detractors of an alleged colonialism than the zeal shown by this Negro in serving his so-called oppressors. (1973: 116)

Photographs of individual visual signifiers of "Islamic fundamentalism" similarly carry larger messages that have the potential to activate cognitive models of latent information (van Dijk, 1988: 21-23). Thus a stern, bearded "middle-Eastern-looking" man wearing a black cloak and turban and carrying a rosary can trigger an entire series of images of a fanatical religious movement, of airplane hijackings, of Western hostages held helpless in dungeons, of truck bombs killing hundreds of innocent people, of cruel punishments sanctioned by "Islamic law," of the suppression of women, and of people flagellating themselves in public; in sum, of intellectual and moral regression.

Compare these perceptions of "Islam" with Barthes' description of the appearance of French television's fictional friar, Abbé Pierre:

a benign expression, a Franciscan haircut, a missionary's beard, all this made complete by the sheepskin coat of the worker-priest and the staff of the pilgrim. Thus are united the marks of legend and those of modernity. (1973: 47)
Whereas symbols derived from Christian traditions can be given a contemporary relevance, those from Muslim institutions are generally interpreted as signifying backwardness. Even though dominant Northern discourses do not overtly promote Christian values and institutions, those representatives of Christianity who are viewed as embodying charity, kindness and self-sacrifice are presented as part of Northern moral leadership.

Whereas images of a regressive "Islam" are usually juxtaposed against Northern technological civilization, the former is also from time to time contrasted with a "charitable Christianity." For example, The Times Yearbook of World Affairs 1979/80 had on its front page two photographs, without captions, placed side by side: they were those of Ayatollah Khomeini and Mother Teresa, two of the major newsmakers of that year. The two seem to have been chosen to underline in the most emphatic way the contrast that exists, according to dominant Northern discourses, between the two religions. In the context of the general coverage of the Iranian revolution and the role of the ayatollah as leading a fanatical movement to overthrow the "modernist" government of the Shah, and on the other hand, the image of the Mother Teresa as the epitome of Christian charity and kindliness, it can be expected that dominant cultural readings of the cover of the volume were carried out within the mythical perceptions of "Islam" and Christianity. Thus we have side by side the representations of Christian apostleship and "Islamic terror," of good and evil.
Usually, the captions of news photographs reinforce their ideological messages. However, in order to work the illustration has to manifest established and widely-accepted cognitive themes. What Stuart Hall has indicated about the function of media portrayals of terrorist's image is applicable to that of "the violent Muslim":

Once we know who the story is about, how he figures in the news - once, that is, the text has added the themes to the image - the photo comes into its own again, refracting the ideological theme at another level. Now we can 'read' the meaning of the closely-cropped, densely compacted composition: the surly, saturnine face: the hard line of the mouth, eyes, ... beard ... : the black suit: the bitter expression. These formal compositional and expressive meanings reinforce and amplify the ideological message. The ambiguities of the photo are here not resolved by a caption. But once the ideological theme has been signalled, the photo takes on a signifying power of its own - it adds or situates the ideological theme, and grounds it at another level. This, it says, is the face ...

[ultimately responsible for] another 'senseless' explosion in downtown Belfast [read: Beirut/Tel Aviv/Paris/London/New York] is all about. This is its subject, its author. It is also a universal mythic sign - the face of all the 'hard men' in history, the portrait of Everyman as a 'dangerous wanted criminal'. (1973: 189)

Or in our case, the timeless face of "the violent Muslim." The bearded "Middle-Eastern-looking" man, sometimes wearing a cloak, has come to symbolize the Muslim as a "dangerous wanted criminal."

Such uses of the faces of well-known "violent Muslims" to inspire fear in Northern audiences appears to have become a well-established trend among American non-petroleum corporate interests.

In order to make a point about alternative energy sources for Americans, Consolidated Edison of New York (Con Ed) ran a striking television advertisement in the summer of 1980. Film clips
of various immediately recognizable OPEC personalities - Yamani, Qaddafi, lesser-known robed figures - alternated with stills as well as clips of other people associated with oil and Islam: Khomeini, Arafat, Hafez al-Assad. None of these figures were mentioned by name, but we were told that "these men" control America's sources of oil. (Said, 1981: 3)

In 1989, the US Council for Energy Awareness, a lobby organization for the American nuclear energy industry, ran print advertisements depicting a drawing of Khomeini holding a small Uncle Sam-like figure tied with string to the little finger of his left hand. The caption read: "IMPORTED OIL STRENGTHENS OUR TIES TO THE MIDDLE EAST." A 1991 version of the advertisement by the Council adopted a format similar to the one described in the above quotation; it had four photos of unidentified men. They were Ayatollah Khomeini, Muammar Qadhafi, Saddam Hussein and Ayatollah Beheshti. The caption was, "If you're uneasy about nuclear electricity, consider the alternatives."

Representations of well-known figures in the mass media normally trigger patterns of thoughts and issues relating to them. These may include false recalls, that is, information we think we have actually read (or heard or seen), but which is inferred from our personal model ...

Generally, people tend to recall best the information that supports their knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes, as well as specific deviations from such information. (van Dijk, 1988: 23)

So entrenched in dominant American culture were the negative perception of these leaders of Muslim countries that the advertiser could be confident that their mere portrayal would elicit the desired response among readers. Violence and avarice - topoi that have been integral to Northern imaginaries of "Islam" - work
Illustration 2

Constructing the "Islamic threat."
We speak of nationalism, but what we're witnessing is the Ayatollization of nationalism – a mix of barbarism, spirituality and abominable claptrap.

**Boundless savagery**

Algeria's way of life

**World**

**Coping with the Unfathomable**

Patience, plus readiness, may be the best weapons against Tehran

"I think there's no point in trying to predict what the Iranians are going to do. We simply have a task to do, and we're going to go ahead and do it."

— said Defense Secretary Casper Weinberger, reflecting what was probably dispatched on short notice. The Silk-worms, situated in isolated spots along the gulf and manned by small crews, could be taken out cleanly.

If Iran chose to escalate in other ways that could be directly traced to Tehran, such as overt mining of gulf waters or the moment is how tactfully alone, expost

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*The Lays of War***

sees it. The whole the necessity of a home and abroad.
with contemporary images of the OPEC oil crisis, "Islamic terrorism" and the military conflicts with Iraq, Iran and Libya to generate readings that arouse fear, resentment and anger.

Lust

Another predominant feature in current Northern iconography of "Islam" are portrayals of Muslim women in chadors. The operative topos here has to do with perceptions of Muslim sexuality, or more precisely, the sexual control that patriarchal "Islamic" society has over its women. Studies by scholars such as Fatima Mernissi (1987) and Leila Ahmed (1992) have explored the poor record that a number of Muslim societies have regarding their treatment of women. What the present analysis contests is not the reality of such repression but its attribution to "Islam" by dominant Northern discourses. "Islamic practices" are frequently viewed as including marriages by Muslim men to a large number of wives whom they confine to a harem, deny them human rights, and divorce them at will as well as performing genital mutilation of daughters, abducting women of European origins, and indulging in "White slavery."

Motion pictures of the early 1900s presented Arabia as an exotic land, with harems and seductive belly dancers. Many of today's perceptions can be traced to the motion picture of the 1920s, The Sheik, starring Rudolph Valentino. The film spurred the practice of lumping Arabs - Egyptians, Iraqis, Bahrainis and others - as a collective group. The film also spawned the illusion of the romantic sheik who abducts young ladies and confines them in his desert tent...
Television has replaced the movie's seductive sheik of the 1920s with the hedonistic sheik of the 1980s. In today's films and television shows, Arabs do not only pursue women, but a host of things, like American real estate, business and government officials. (Shaheen, 1984: 13)

The primary theme of lust thus merges with that of the Muslim man's avarice, both appetites being satisfied by immoral, if not illicit, means.

The topos of lust is regularly manifested in Northern mass media in a variety of manners; for example, news stories about police raids on up-scale bordellos seem to make special efforts in indicating the presence of "Arab sheiks" among the wealthy (but otherwise unidentified) clients. This theme also appears within other contexts which link the topoi of violence, lust and greed. In its July 27, 1991 issues, the British weekly The Spectator ran a lead story on the effect of the collapse of the Arab-owned and Pakistani-operated Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) upon the Bank of England. The cover page had a cartoon showing a swarthy man with dark glasses attempting to embrace an elderly White woman sitting on a locked trunk marked "Bank of England." She was drawn crying out

   Murder! - murder! Rape! -- Murder! O you Villain! what have I kept my Honour untainted so long to have it broke up by you at last? O murder! - Rape! Ravishment! - Ruin! Ruin! Ruin!

The caption said "POLITICAL RAVISHMENT or the Old Lady of Threadneedle Street in danger!" Indignant about the accusations that blamed the failure of BCCI on the Bank of England, the magazine portrayed the affair as a
rape of the "grand old lady" by the Muslim owners and managers of the foreign bank.

Even the religious practices of Muslims are at times described with sexual metaphors: the festivities related to the holy month of Ramadan were described by The Globe and Mail with the headline, "Egyptians mark fast with orgy of feasts" (19/3/92). Continual repetition of the images of lust in portrayals of Muslims thus serves to reinforce excessive attention to sexuality as an essential feature of "Islam." Viewed from the dominantly de-sexualized worldview of Christianity, the Muslim Other becomes a foil for the disciplined Self: "the West is social stability; the East pleasure, unrestricted by social dictates" (Kabbani, 1986: 21). A feature article published in The Ottawa Citizen (11/7/92: B2) and The Vancouver Sun (13/7/92) on "The women of fundamentalist Islam" written by Deborah Scroggins of the Atlanta Journal/Constitution and distributed by the Cox News Service, stated: "Islamic fundamentalists speak dozens of different languages and come from hundreds of different ethnic groups in more than 30 nations spread across the belly of the world." Muslim males were portrayed here as mistreating their women and as inhabiting the entrails of an anthropomorphic globe. The (rational and disciplined) head in this scheme - in inverse relation to the Muslim "belly of the world" - would represent Europe and North America.

Some groups that adhere to Islam do have repressive cultural practices against women, which are legitimized in the name of religion (Memissi, 1987). However, Northern observers usually fail to distinguish between the heterogenous
the institution of "Islamic law" in some Muslim countries - draws attention to the ideological slants of dominant Northern discourses about Muslim women.

There can be few people of Arab or Muslim background (including, and perhaps even particularly, the feminists among them) who have not noticed and been disheartened by the way in which Arab and Muslim "oppression" of women is invoked in Western media and sometimes in scholarship in order to justify and even insidiously promote hostility toward Arabs and Muslims. It is disheartening, too, that some feminist scholarly work continues to uncritically reinscribe the old story. Whole books are unfortunately still being published in which the history of Arab women is told within the framework of the paradigm that Cramer [a turn of century British colonial administrator in Egypt] put forward - that the measure of whether Muslim women were liberated or not lay in whether they veiled or whether the particular society had become "progressive" and westernized or insisted on clinging to Arab and Islamic ways. (1992: 247)

Thus even some Northern feminist and liberal analyses of the Muslim world remain couched in dominant Northern imaginaries of "Islam," which are related to centuries-old Christian perceptions of Muslims as well as to the more recent colonialist ideologies. The challenge for those in the North who would seek to develop truly alternative discourses on "Islam" is first to recognize their own deeply entrenched biases against Muslims.

The topos of lust is often combined with that of violence in Northern representations of Muslim societies. In its front-page "Spotlight" feature, The Ottawa Citizen on March 14, 1989 published a story from the little-known Dallas Morning News headlined, "Death or honor: Ritual killing removes stain." It
opened with the narration of the murder of a pregnant, unmarried woman by her father in a village in the West Bank.

Nura's death - involving family honour and blood revenge - underscores the position of women in traditional Arab society and the struggle by a tribal culture to cope with modernity. It also illustrates the vast cultural differences between Arab and Western societies.

Many Arabs, especially those in urban areas, are well-educated and would be appalled by the thought of a ritual killing. But Arab experts say millions of people have fallen back on the traditional culture and a strict religious code as the answers to economic and social problems.

When Iran's Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini sentenced British novelist Salman Rushdie to death for insulting the Muslim prophet Mohammed in the novel *The Satanic Verses*, he briefly lay bare to the West the Arab [sic] concept of honor and blood revenge, which is growing in strength with the Islamic fundamentalism.

Many Arab specialists contend that these cultural differences play a major part in the conflict between Israeli Jews and Arabs in the occupied territories and surrounding countries.

"Jewish society, like Western Christian society, is a guilt-oriented society," said Moshe Sharon, a professor of Islam at Hebrew University.

"But Arab society is a shame-oriented society," Sharon said...

From an incident that occurred in one village in Palestine the writer extrapolated concentrically to Palestinian culture, to Arab culture and then to Muslim culture.

This account appears coherent within the dominant script that holds Muslims to be congenitally violent, barbaric and oppressive towards women. "Well-educated" Arabs, i.e. those who were Westernized and had abandoned "tribal culture" and religious values, were the only ones who would have been "appalled by the thought of the ritual killing." The "ritual" was implied as being "Islamic" in nature and shared by Muslims in Iran (whom the writer seems unable to distinguish from
Arabs); "Islamic fundamentalists" were presented as especially favouring it.

Ideological closure was carried out with the words of an Israeli "Arab specialist" who, on the strength of his academic credentials, could confirm the essential divergence of Jewish and Western Christian society with Arab/Muslim society. It thus becomes the mission of the Judeo-Christian world to bring civilization to the Arab/Muslim Other by occupying her/his land and instructing her/him about the norms of modern society. The intense levels of direct and structural violence against women, men and children involved in such colonial ventures is disregarded, as it is normal for the mass media to place the focus on individual incidents of violence. With such attention to the "barbarism" of other cultures we can also shift attention for the systemic violence against women in our own (cf. Statistics Canada, 1993) and can assuage our "guilt-oriented society" with the assurance that we are not that bad after all. The content of the Dallas Morning News article was evidently so consonant with the views of The Ottawa Citizen's editors about "Islam" that it was placed on the front-page's "Spotlight column."

The mission to "civilize" Orientals does not stop Northerners from retaining images of them as "exotic creatures." In fact, this perceived characteristic becomes part of their acceptance into "civilization." The lead paragraph of an article in The Ottawa Citizen on the popularity of "ethnic models" in the fashion industry stated:

Their names whisper of exotic places - Iman, Aisata, Eugenie, Keshi, Yasmin. Their skin tones range from rich chocolate to golden honey, creamy beige to fragile ivory. Their features are
powerful, unusual, unforgettable - deep, almond-shaped eyes, wide, provocative mouths, strong, structured noses, firm, unyielding chins. (26/1/89: C7)

This came from the same source (the Dallas Morning News) that produced the front-page feature article on the "ritual killing." That story was supposed to be an illustration of "the vast cultural differences between Arab and Western societies"; however, the same discourse also seemed to be saying that if the "quirky" and "exotic" barbarians of the Orient will let us tame them we will allow them to perform within the commercial structures of our society.

Apart from the Northern script of the Muslim woman as repressed by her (false) religion and her (fornicating and oppressive) men is another contrasting image represented by the belly dancer. A variation of the dual "madonna-whore" image of women in Northern societies (Weibel, 1977: 95-98) seems at times to be reproduced in Northern representations of the Muslim woman. At the top of a Maclean's article on "The New Islamic Whirlwind" (1/4/85: 22-25) a photograph of a young "Bikini-clad sunbather in Beirut" was juxtaposed with that of a group of mostly elderly Iranian women in black chadors amidst a portrait of Ayatollah Khomeini. While in traditional Northern morality plays the "goodness" of the chaste woman is counterposed with the "badness" of the seductive "vamp," in this representation of Middle Eastern females the freedom enjoyed by the sunbather appears to be contrasted with the repression suffered by the veiled women. Attire (or the lack of it) becomes the representation of modernity and progress, on the one hand, and of Oriental backwardness on the other. However, the same
discourse would view modernity and tradition as integrated in the contemporary clothing of Christian nuns (as in the garments of Abbé Pierre). Whereas both are marks of modesty, as seen from the perspectives of their respective traditions, they are interpreted differently by dominant Northern discourses that do not seem to be able to tolerate anything that has not submitted to their norms.

Like the mullah's cloak, chadors have become ubiquitous visual representations of "Islam" in print media and television; often, veiled Iranian women are shown holding pictures of robed, turbaned and bearded ayatollahs, thus ideologically closing the visual image to express the repression of Muslim females by fanatical male leaders of "Islam." One image of Muslim women that has become a popular icon of "Islamic fundamentalism" in the Northern mass media is that of a veiled woman holding a weapon. In the third picture illustrating the top of the *Maclean's* article on "The New Islamic Whirlwind" was an image of a woman wearing a scarf wrapped on her head and holding an automatic rifle in her hand, with Persian writing on the blackboard behind her. It was captioned, "weapons class in Teheran: renaissance of Islam" - thus the "renaissance of Islam" was reduced to teaching Muslim women how to use contemporary means of violence while continuing to repress them culturally. Pictures of similar training for women in Northern countries, usually denoting the opening of previously closed military and police institutions to female recruits, is culturally framed within the myth of Progress. However, progress and liberation for Oriental women
Illustration 3

The portrayal of "Islam" and women.
LIFE
BEHIND
THE
VEIL

BY CHERRY LINDHOLM AND CHARLES LINDHOLM
An intimate view of the secret world of Moslem women. They lack status but brandish enormous sexual power.

Islam Versus the West
Fundamentalism takes many forms besides terrorism.

The New Islamic Whirlwind
Islam's Veiled Threat
seems to be limited in dominant Northern discourses to the freedom of wearing bikinis, illustrated by the first of the three photos heading the Maclean's write-up.

Even without the gun, the wearing of a hijab by Muslim women and girls seems to denote the Other. Students who have chosen to don the garment tend to be reviled in schools. According to Reba Murtaza, a 17-year old Toronto high school student who decided to wear the hijab, "I was in the hallway and people would say, 'She's a terrorist'" (The Ottawa Citizen, 17/9/94: C6). To her, putting on the robe was an act of asserting her personal identity: "Wearing hijab is my way of saying I'm Muslim and Canadian ... Being Canadian ... means making your own choices and choosing your own lifestyle. It's not about doing what your parents or peers want, but doing what you feel is right." However, dominant societal discourses tend to militate against such self-expressions of Canadian identities: upon seeing a picture of a woman wearing a hijab, children in a Toronto elementary school said that she could not be "Canadian" (The Toronto Star, 31/1/91: A6).

Articles on religion which portray Muslim women wearing Western attire also tend to depict them within a sombre framework. This was apparent in the December 1, 1991 issue of the women's monthly Canadian Living, which discussed the contemporary role of Canadian women in "male-centred religions": Christianity, Judaism and Islam (1/12/91: 24-30). The first portrait at the beginning of the write-up, occupying more than three-fourths of two pages was that of Reverend Janet Cawley of the United Church in the light-coloured robes of an
ordained minister with her arms uplifted in an expression of joy. There were other portraits of Joyce Deveau Kennedy, who had failed in her attempts to become a Catholic priest, and Norma Baumel Joseph, a Judaic scholar - both of which had bright backgrounds. However, the picture of Zayn Kassam-Hann, a Shiite Muslim studying for a doctorate in religious studies, the smallest of the four photographs, was in dark tones.

Notions of darkness and the unknown appear to predominate in Northern imaginaries about Muslims. Suppression of Muslim women by Muslim men is a favourite theme. The violent and despot Muslim is a well-established image which appears in new and varied forms almost everyday in the mass media. This stereotype can be manipulated and pressed into service for current needs. The image of illegitimate Muslim violence - validated by centuries of propaganda - can be readily brought out to embellish the "facts" of news reports. Northern violence, structural or direct, on the other hand, is usually presented as legitimate and necessary to deal with these people who are endemically warlike. Violence interacts with other Northern topoi about Muslims - lust, greed and barbarism - to construct culturally the composite picture of savages who have to be tamed and controlled, by force if necessary. Their energies, their resources, their land, and their exotic natures all have to be directed appropriately if they are to participate in a global system which the North dominates.
Notes

1. As discussed in the previous chapter, the operation of similar sets of stereotypes of Northern peoples in Muslim discourses (cf. Ghanoonparvar, 1993) does not compare to the Orientalist institutionalization of Northern imaginaries about Islam.

2. See Karim (1991) for an extensive list of sources.


4. This poll, carried out for the National Conference of Christians and Jews, inquired into the attitudes of various American minority groups about each other. Agreement for the statement was 48 per cent among Latino Americans, 41 per cent among non-Muslim White Americans, 39 per cent among Black Americans, and 30 per cent among Asian Americans. Dutt (1994: 5).


6. "A Holy War?" The Ottawa Sun (22/1/91: 10). Time magazine explained the reasons for Afghan boys in participating in the war against the Soviet army in this manner: "In a jihad, or holy war, there are no age guidelines for combat. If a commander decides a boy is ready, then he fights." (18/6/90: 34).

7. Cf. Ilya Gerol, "West should replace Iran policy with strong support for Mojahedin opposition," The Ottawa Citizen (24/6/87: A6).

8. This article was later expanded into a book with the same title (1995).

9. For example, The Art Newspaper (London) had the following sub-headline: "The American cultural community is on the ropes, trying to forestall what some are calling a "Congressional fatwa" (Apr. 1995: 20-21).

10. Ironically, the origins of the academic gown in the North that lie in the cloak-like garments (jamiaaposh) of the ulama-run university staff of medieval Muslim institutions are overlooked in dominant Northern discourses on "Islam."

11. Cf. UPI, "Ivy League' madam arranged health insurance for call girls," The Montreal Gazette (18/10/84: F9). The science fiction series "Star Trek" - which often deals with the "unusual" customs of alien cultures - frequently features "Muslim" imagery when depicting "totally hedonistic" societies. For example, the episode titled "Wolf in the Fold" which had buildings with arabesque designs and oriental rugs and scenes of women belly dancing, was described as "a totally hedonistic society." The law of the land, populated by "a simple and gentle folk" was "love," although the penalty for murder was a "barbaric" "death by slow torture." This seems typical of what Hanna Kassis description of the basic Northern stereotypes of Muslims as violent, "luxury-lovers" and "sex-maniacs" (1992: 261).

12. The comparatively worse status of women in Arab countries was noted by the UNDP's Human Development Report 1995.

13. On a similar note, Shahrzad Mojab criticizes "the racism in some of the white feminist movements in the West" (1995: 23). Also see Shahnaz Khan (1994).
14. It is not my intention here to support the wearing of the chador, but to discuss the ideological manipulation of the images of Muslim women wearing it.
Chapter 7

Assassins, Kidnappers, and Hostages
Academic Constructions of "Islamic Terrorism"

This chapter studies Northern mass media's reporting of violent reactions by some Muslims to the cultural, economic, and military interventions by the North. Muslims have generally responded to Northern hegemony over their lands through the symbols and discourses of their own socio-cultural heritages, the nuances of which are largely unfamiliar to the international mass media. Most reporting on the activities of militants tends to be characterized as "fanatical," "irrational" and as being typical of "Islam." Whereas these responses have for the large part been non-violent, some Islamists have carried out atrocities whose brutality seems designed to gain the maximum level of attention. Violent opposition to what the militants see as aspects of Northern imperialism in their countries becomes characterized as "Islamic terrorism," without exploring either the "Islamicness" of such actions or the effects of the structural violence of Northern hegemony. The ubiquitous and overwhelming influence of the North on the inhabitants of all Muslim societies and the contemporary debates among Muslims about the nature and history of their religion is also usually absent in the media's dominant discourses.

While the Muslims who embrace technological myths are usually lauded in the international mass media, those who oppose them and propose indigenous alternatives are often portrayed as reactionary or backward. Violent responses to the dominant Northern discourses on development tend generally to become the focus of negative reporting, being presented as typical of all those who resist
modernization (i.e. Westernization). Recourse to jihad is usually depicted as a normal response by Muslims to progress and not as a subject, among many others, which is currently of intense debate. Dominant discourses on "Islamic terrorism" thus achieve semantic and ideological closure by establishing what are normative reactions from Muslims to the universal march of progress. Alternative discourses that present other ways of viewing the problem are usually overwhelmed by "common sense" assumptions and the ubiquity of dominant discourses.

Northern journalists who report on Muslim societies are dependent to a considerable extent on the academic descriptions of "Islam" and Muslims. Edward Said makes the link between the discourses of Orientalists and the international mass media:

... the canonical, orthodox coverage of Islam that we find in the academy, in the government, and in the media is all interrelated and has been more diffused, has seemed more persuasive and influential, in the West than any other "coverage" or interpretation. The success of this coverage can be attributed to the political influence of those people and institutions producing it rather than necessarily to truth or accuracy ... this coverage has served purposes only tangentially related to actual knowledge of Islam itself. The result has been the triumph not just of a particular knowledge of Islam but rather of a particular interpretation which, however, has neither been unchallenged nor impervious to the kinds of questions asked by unorthodox, inquiring minds. (1981: 161)

Leading Orientalists such as Bernard Lewis, Elie Kedourie and Panyotidis J. Vatikiotis, whose work Said (1978; 1981) has analyzed critically for its distortion of the histories of Muslim societies, have played a significant role in developing the dominant discourses on "Islamic terrorism." The three of them contributed their
views at a conference on terrorism in 1979 organized by the Jonathan Institute in Jerusalem, which sees "the battle against terrorism ... (as) part of a much larger struggle, one between the forces of civilization and the forces of barbarism" (Netanyahu, 1987: ix). This premise is an essential part of dominant discourses on terrorism and forms the basis of the dramaturgy of the war between the nation-state and the terrorist.

The apparent purpose of Benjamin Netanyahu (a prominent Israeli politician who headed the Jonathan Foundation) in holding the conference was to reinforce the image of Israel as an indispensable ally of "civilization" in its struggle against terrorism. That state has generally been seen in dominant international discourses as an island of Western values in a sea of Arab and Muslim barbarism. This perception, which has strengthened significantly since the violent Arab opposition to the formation of Israel in 1948, has been constructed in part through cultural presentations of Muslims as inherently violent people who have repressed non-Muslim minorities. However, most historians have been in agreement over the fact that Jewish and Christian minorities in Muslim lands, apart from some isolated outbursts of intolerance against them, had a significant level of communal autonomy within Muslim polities to the extent of administering their own systems of family law (Mann, 1920; Halkin, 1956; Fischel, 1968; Lapidus, 1988). But much ideological effort has been expended recently in rewriting the history of the relationship between Muslims and Jews to show that the Arab-Israeli conflict has ancient roots. Bernard Lewis has been at the forefront of this reinterpretation that
serves to portray Arab/Muslim countries as opposed inherently to Judaism instead of to the political ideology of Zionism. This belief contributes to dominant discourses on "Islamic terrorism" by linking "Islam" with the phenomenon of anti-semitism and the historical violence related to it. Thus, through the rewriting of history that transfers the locus of anti-semitism from Europe to Muslim societies, the West (including Israel) becomes united in the war against "Islamic terrorism" (Dossa, 1988).

Lewis attempted to explain through a convoluted argument at the 1979 conference why "it is appropriate to use 'Islam' as a term of definition and classification in discussing present-day terrorism" even though "terrorism of the modern kind, directed against bystanders, non-combatants, and the innocent is not Islamic" (1986: 65-66). The use of the term "Islamic terrorism" was correct, according to him, because of "the essentially political character which the Islamic religion has had from its very foundation and retains to the present day" and "the reassertion of this association of Islam and politics at the present time (66) ... Thus it is inevitable that when the Islamic world confronts the problem of terrorism, that problem too, assumes a religious, indeed in a sense an Islamic, aspect" (67). (Lewis did not attempt to make any comparisons with the relationship between Judaism and politics in biblical or modern times nor did he bother to dwell on the contemporary terrorism of right-wing Jewish groups in Israel and the United States, to suggest that it would also be, for the reasons he gives, normative to refer to a "Judaic terrorism.")
Lewis went on to identify two main types of "Violent conflict as perceived in Islamic law and tradition, and as expressed in Islamic history" (ibid). The first type is "between the world of Islam and the outside world of believers" which is to be conducted with due warning and declarations to the enemy on the eve of hostilities, and with the observance of the laws of war - not the ones we know at the present time, but the ones laid down by Islamic law. And these leave no place for what might be called terrorism, even by the wider definitions that have been proffered. (Ibid)

(Lewis did not draw the attention of his audience to the similarities between the ancient Jewish code of war and the rules of jihad.) The second type, according to him, is internal armed conflict among Muslims "where violence is called upon to defend God's state or, alternatively, to remove those who have somehow violated and usurped it" and which tends to manifest itself as terrorism. Giving the example of the "Assassins," a 11th-13th century Shia (Ismaili) group, he implied that whereas the first kind of violence was legitimate in the "Islamic" order, in so far as it adhered to "Islamic law," the second was not. This Orientalist was attempting to demonstrate, on the one hand, that the terrorism of the "Assassins" was not within the "Islamic" norms of the dominant legal-theological Muslim discourses which helped buttress the ruling powers, and was insisting, on the other, that there is such a thing as "Islamic terrorism." As Said (1981: xi) has pointed out, Muslim history becomes extremely pliable in the hands of Orientalists, who manipulate it to fit even contrary explanations for the same phenomenon. Although Lewis's presentation was ostensibly on the legitimacy of the term "Islamic terrorism" he did
not touch on this in his conclusion; instead he stated that although the "Assassins" continued to operate for centuries, they "ended in total failure ... having accomplished none of their purposes" (69). Attempting to establish in this the pedigree of "Islamic terrorism," he achieved ideological closure by supposedly demonstrating that it was futile and usually came to a dismal end.

The legend of the "Assassins," first popularized in Europe by the Crusaders and by Marco Polo, has become a standard reference in Northern discourses about "Islamic terrorism." This tale, much embellished in the course of time, is about Nizari Ismailis who had managed to acquire strings of strategically-located forts in northern Iran and in Syria/Lebanon during the eleventh century. Under attack from the vastly superior military powers such as the Seljuk sultanate and the Crusaders, they adopted the method of assassinating the military and administrative leaders of their enemies rather than engage them on the battlefield (Hodgson, 1955). Orientalist writings imputed that the Nizari Ismaili fida'is who took part in what amounted to suicidal missions were convinced into risking their lives by being drugged with hashish and then led to a paradisiacal garden populated with enchanting damsels; eternal residence in this garden was promised to them upon their death. (The origin of the word "assassin" is consequently attributed to "hashish.") Even though this fantastic story has been found to be lacking in historical evidence (Daftary, 1995; Hodgson, 1955: 133-37), it continues to fascinate the Northern imagination.
Discussions about "Islamic terrorism" usually cite this exotic tale which confirms dominant images about Muslims. The following paragraph, from an article titled "Terrorism: modern word for ancient violent acts," appeared in a regular Ottawa Citizen column by Harry Bruce on the origins and history of words.

Next year is the 900th anniversary of the founding of the Mohammedan order of Assassins, which flourished during the Crusades. Let's not celebrate with fireworks and folk dancing. The Assassins' sheikh, Hassan ben Sabbah (The Old Man of the Mountain) used to send them out to murder Christian leaders. A jolly bunch, they got themselves zonked on hashish before strapping on their scimitars. (23/9/89: H2)

The writer did not provide any context for the reasons why the "Assassins" sought to kill Christian leaders - the dominant script of Muslims being endemically violent and barbaric served as sufficient cause for the acts. Not only did he include the apocryphal detail about the use of hashish, but also confused Hasan-i Sabbah, resident in a fort in northern Iran, for Rashid al-din Sinan in Syria/Lebanon, who had made peace with the Crusader ruler of Jerusalem (Amalric I) but was opposed by the Hospitaller and Templar military orders (Daftary, 1995: 68-72). In a script for an adventure game listed as "GRASS/Assassins" in the World Wide Web on the Internet, Loren Miller states that

the Assassins are a perfect "evil" enemy for players. they [sic] could be the main enemy for a medieval campaign in the Levant, and would be a very dangerous one as they had the finest spy system in the world.

(http://hops.wharton.upenn.edu/~loren/Links/grass/assassins.ss)
Despite historical findings that have debunked the more fantastic aspects of the Assassins myth, it appears that this group of Muslims will continue for some time to provide the characters of "the perfect 'evil' enemy" in Northern popular culture.

Elie Kedourie, another speaker at the Jonathan Institute's conference in Jerusalem, delineated further the genealogy of contemporary terrorism in the annals of Muslim history. He gave more examples of a few other terrorist groups in the 14 centuries of Muslim history, attempting to demonstrate that Shi'ism was inherently terroristic. Kedourie cited what he termed as the "in-built Messianism" of Shi'ism: "This Messianism has usually encouraged political passivity, but it can also fuel political activism of an extreme kind, and lead to terrorist acts, as with the Assassins" (1987b: 72) (there were no comparisons with the "in-built messianism" of Judaism or Christianity). In addition to Muslim precedents, Kedourie also credited (unspecified) European political theory for the rise of contemporary "Islamic terrorism."

Modern European political thought and attitudes have a prominent strand of messianic activism and violence - of what can be called ideological thuggery. This feature of European political thought became part of the world-wide market of ideas and eventually passed, with much else into the world of Islam. One of the earliest figures associated with terrorism, in theory and in practice, was the well-known Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-97), whose activities ranged over a large part of the Muslim world. Afghani was a Shiite, and his thought is a strange amalgam of Western and Eastern notions. (72-73)

He then went on to lump together secularist revolutionary movements in the Middle East such as the Algerian Front de Libération Nationale and the Palestinian
Liberation Organization with those who identify themselves with "Islam" such as the Muslim Brethren, the Takfīr wa-l-Hijra and the Tanzim al-Jihād. All become part of the undifferentiated phenomenon of "Islamic terrorism" which was presented as the spawn of nefarious "Islamic" and European ideas.

It was left to Benjamin Netanyahu⁶, who became familiar to North American television viewers as the Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations in the late 1980s, to extend Kedourie's explanations to bring together what some Orientalists have for decades perceived as the twin evils of "Islam" and communism.⁶

Though Islamic radicalism is opposed to communist secularism, their common antagonism to the West has often united them. Worlds apart in other matters, they join in utterly rejecting the central democratic tenet, that the governing authority is derived from popular consent and not from a religious or ideological decree. Both Islamic fundamentalists and communist totalitarians view the expansion, even the existence, of democratic ideas as inherently threatening to their own authority. This is how it is possible, indeed common, to find radical groups professing to be at the same time both Islamic and Marxist. The West will not be able to stem the tide of international terrorism without first facing squarely this alliance in terror. (1987: 63)

Muslim opposition to the cultural, ideological and military hegemony of the North was translated here into opposition to democracy. Nothing was said about the viability of "the central democratic tenet" in Israel, as it repressed millions of people in territories it had occupied militarily, nor did Netanyahu specify which "radical groups" professed "to be at the same time both Islamic and Marxist." Yet the appeal of this singularly successful propagandist seemed to lie in the manner he
was able to play on the worst fears of Western audiences with vague and unsubstantiated statements. The marriage of the twin demons of "Islam" (which for centuries has been disparaged by European propagandists) and Marxism (the secularist incarnation of evil), helped to outline in a simple fashion a villain that could be clearly identified, feared and hated. As Jacques Ellul has noted, "Each individual harbours a large number of stereotypes and established tendencies; from this arsenal the propagandist must select those easiest to mobilize, those which will give the greatest strength to the action he wants to precipitate" (1969: 35). It is in such ways that dominant discourses on "Islamic terrorism" are given shape and sustained by academic and state propagandists, whose frameworks are then adopted by the mass media in covering ongoing events.

Structural violence is non-existent in the scenarios painted by Lewis, Kedourie and Netanyahu. Use of massive direct and indirect violence by dominant states is invisible in the global discourses on terrorism which only see the violence of those entities that oppose the established order. While the organizations that are opposed to the technological myth of the Nation are anathemized in dominant international discourses, those states that challenge the hegemony of the West also become characterized as "terrorist states." Not only did Netanyahu overlook the structural violence of powerful states, he neatly excised from his list of terrorist groups those organizations such as the Irgun and the Stern Gang (which helped obtain Jewish control of Palestine in the 1930s and 1940s) as well as contemporary right-wing movements which also use terrorism. He saw the phenomenon as
limited to "the two main antagonists of democracy in the postwar world, communist totalitarianism and Islamic radicalism, [which] have between them inspired virtually all of contemporary terrorism" (3).

"Islamic terrorism" has become a "hot topic" for conferences in various Northern countries where academics and state security personnel meet to discuss it. For example, an international conference organized at the University of Manitoba in April 1990 by the "Counter-Terror Study Centre" was initially titled "Islamic Terrorism in the 1990s and the Threat to North America." (The title was changed to "Middle Eastern Terrorism" following protests by the local Muslim community.) "Islamic terrorism" has become an identifiable phenomenon which is held to be based on the cultural history of "Islam" and to be anti-Western, irrational and against progress. This "knowledge" becomes part of the commonplace wisdom that is held to be self-evident and upon which other assumptions can be based. Every new incident of terrorism in which Arabs or Muslims are involved reconfirms this cognitive model.

"Islamic Terrorism" in the Media

The mass media generally echo the dominant discourses on "Islamic terrorism" outlined by Orientalists and the state. References to the Muslim past, including those to the "Assassins," are often used to demonstrate the endemically violent nature of contemporary "Islamic terrorists." In its April 21, 1986 issue, Time magazine had cover story titled "Targeting Gaddafi," which attempted to
make the case for the imminent bombing of Libya by American forces. (Whereas the Libyan leader had been known to support terrorist groups, no evidence had been made public of his involvement in the bombing of a Western German discotheque of which he was accused by the Reagan administration.) A two-page article by Richard Stengel presented a profile with the headline, "Gaddafi: Obsessed by a Ruthless, Messianic Vision." It sought to link his support for terrorism and with an "Islamic" fanaticism:

... his messianic vision, like the turbans in which he wraps himself, does not camouflage his vicious methods and his ruthless fanaticism. He believes his own erratic ends are justified by any means, however bloody. He has become the modern-day incarnation of the society of Assassins, which flourished from the 11th to the 13th century in the Middle East, only his victims are random and spread over the entire map. The primary tool of his effort to achieve Islamic unity and the elimination of Israel is terrorism. Gaddafi regards himself not only as the last great hope of pan-Islam but as the scourge of the West, which he fervently believes has humiliated the Arab world for centuries. It is a humiliation he intends to avenge. (32)

The writer, conflating Gadhafi's pan-Arabism with pan-Islamism, had clearly intended to create the image of a dangerous man, an arch "Islamic terrorist" who had to be stopped. In the apparent effort to provide justification for the impending American action against Libya, the concluding line of the write-up stated:

"Whatever his motive, whether it is the quest for pan-Islam or only a greater audience for himself, he will not rest until he has struck back or been struck down" (33). The implication was that peace would be achieved once the Libyan leader had "been struck down." In fact, it seems that it was Washington's own
overwhelming desire to seek revenge for a terrorist act - which it later turned out that Libya had not carried out (The New York Times, 3/10/86: A1, A6) - that was being projected onto Gadhafi. The writer could capitalize on the cognitive model that already existed in the mind of the reader regarding "Islamic terrorism," Libya, Gadhafi, and American military operations, as van Dijk has indicated for this particular case (1988: 23). This propagandic technique was to be used again on a larger scale for the much more massive bombing of Iraq by Western powers in 1991.

According to the dominant discourses on "Islam," those motivated by the religion to carry out *jihad* do not operate according to the ordinary rationale or logic present in the civilized world. Commenting on the participation of Afghan boys in guerilla activities, a *Time* magazine article declared: "In a jihad, or holy war, there are no age guidelines for combat. If a commander decides a boy is ready, then he fights" (18/6/90: 34). It is ironic that such discourses should consider the actions of Muslim terrorists to be devoid of any rules when it is a rule-bound "Islamic" society that many of them are fighting for. Fathi Osman, editor-in-chief of a now defunct magazine, *Arabia*, made the following observations about *jihad*:

... when force to achieve justice becomes necessary, Islam has its restrictions for the use of force. It should be bound by the objective and collective cause which is precisely defined by Shariah, not to personal desires. In any case, a legitimate fight for a legitimate cause should be limited to the combatants or the forces which are responsible for the aggression or oppression. According to the teachings of Islam, children, women, priests and monks, peasants and all peaceful civilians as a whole have always been secured from having to face any military assault. A Muslim is bound to the laws and ethics of Islam in jihad ...  

However, those who construct discourses on "Islamic terrorism" prefer to mystify *jihad*, thus rendering futile attempts to understand the socio-cultural bases of such activity.

References to the devoutness of terrorists to "Islam" in journalistic narratives seem to be offered as explanations of why they are engaged in deviant activities. Arab terrorists are generally seen as following "Islamic" dictates, even
when they declare themselves to be secularist. The sacred and the profane also intertwine in fiction writer John Le Carré's depiction of a Palestinian terrorist in his best-seller, *The Little Drummer Girl*:

He was picked up again when he arrived by air in Istanbul, where he checked into the Hilton on a Cypriot diplomatic passport and for two days gave himself to the religious and secular pleasures of the town. The followers described him as taking one last good draught of Islam before returning to the Christian commons of Europe. He visited the Mosque of Suleiman the Magnificent, where he was seen to pray no less than three times, and afterwards to have his Gucci shoes polished once, on the grassy promenade that runs beside the South Wall. (1983: 58)

Le Carré's character acts according to the dominant journalistic script about "Islamic terrorists" even though, when he wrote the novel, Palestinian Islamists were not active in terrorism. The book was later made into a film.10

The image of violence has been so completely enmeshed with "Islam" in the dominant Northern discourses that even when non-Muslim Middle Easterners are involved in violent confrontations they are presented as being Muslim. Although a significant proportion of the members of the PLO are Christian, including George Habbash, the head of the Popular Front for the Liberation for the Liberation of Palestine (one of the most active terrorist organizations in the 1970s) the dominant image of the PLO was that its members were solely Muslim. (The ideological construction of this perception is discussed in Chapter 10.) When religious militancy began to emerge among Palestinians, threatening the secularist and nationalist aspirations of the PLO, Western journalists - operating within the dominant script - ironically presented this as strengthening the organization.11
"Islamic terrorists" seem to become immediate suspects in terrorist incidents around the world, even when evidence against them is non-existent. For example, the bombing of Jewish community centre in Buenos Aires in July 1994 (Globe and Mail, 20/7/94: A7) and of US federal buildings in Oklahoma City in April 1995 was laid initially on "Muslim terrorists" (Globe & Mail, 20/4/95: A1). Persons of Middle Eastern backgrounds who happened to be in those cities at those respective times were apprehended and interrogated at length, merely due to their ethnic and religious backgrounds. (One man of Jordanian origins was even flown back from London to the US for questioning by the FBI.) As it turned out, members of a neo-Nazi organization in Argentina (Ottawa Citizen, 2/12/95: A6) and "home-grown" anti-federalist Americans (Ottawa Citizen, 22/4/95: E12) were eventually found to be the more likely suspects in the respective incidents - none of them were Muslims. Whereas Muslims have been involved in terrorist atrocities, such a single-minded focus on "Islam" as the primary source of violence actually permits the real culprits in situations like these to get a head start in eluding the authorities. The contemporary suspicion of Muslims being involved in terrorist incidents around the world seems to resemble the Cold War paranoia about "commies" lurking under every bed.

The blame for the actions of "Islamic" or "Muslim fundamentalists" is implicitly laid on "Islam" by using the same adjectives that hundreds of millions of other Muslims use to describe their peaceful ways of life and their respect for humanity. When Islamists in Algeria ruthlessly killed fellow Muslims and other
people in their self-righteous attempt to gain power they were called "Islam's cruel warriors" (Economist, 13/8/94: 14), and the suspects in the bombing of the Jewish community building in Buenos Aires were described as "Islamic extremists" (Globe and Mail, 20/7/94: A7) and perpetrators of "Muslim terrorism" (Newsweek, 8/8/94: 24). Such descriptions contrast with the manners in which the violent actions of Christians are covered.

Two events were reported simultaneously in the March 15, 1993 issues of Maclean's, Time, and Newsweek magazines: they were, respectively, the probable involvement of Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman in the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York and the deadly clash of the Branch Davidians with US federal agents in Waco, Texas. Whereas the articles about the former incident were punctuated with references such as "Muslim fundamentalist," "extremist Muslim terrorist groups," "Muslim militants" (Maclean's, 15/3/93: 27), "Muslim cleric," "Islamic holy war," "Sunni worshippers," "Muslim fundamentalist," "Islamic fundamentalist movements" (Time, 15/3/93: 29-32), "Islamic link," "Muslim sect," "Sunni sect," "Islamic community," "the Islamic movement," "Islamic populism," "Muslim fundamentalism," and "Islamic fundamentalist" (Newsweek, 15/3/93: 3, 24-34), the three North American weeklies were loathe to use the adjective "Christian" to describe the Branch Davidians, even though they did all report that the leader of the "cult," David Koresh, had claimed to be Christ (Maclean's, 15/3/93: 24-25; Time, 15/3/93: 34-43; Newsweek, 15/3/93: 52-61). Whether conscious or unconscious, there does appear to be a tendency in dominant
discourses to avoid calling the "extremists" or "fundamentalists" from the Christian tradition "Christians." On the other hand, there almost seems to be a certain eagerness to pepper accounts about similar groups from the Muslim tradition with the adjectives "Muslim" and "Islamic."

Constructing the Hostage

Cultural images of abductions of Northerners by Muslims have existed for a long time. Tales of "White slavery" involving the kidnapping of European women by Arabs have gripped the Northern imagination. In the present century, there have been innumerable romances written about White women abducted by swarthy noble savages from the desert; films such as "The Sheik" and "The Wind and the Lion" replicated this theme on celluloid. In the Elvis Presley film "Haram Scarum," the hero was kidnapped by an Arab group, whose chief was called Sinan - the name of a leader of the medieval "Assassins." In this we have the manifestation of the Northern hero/victim suffering his trials as a hostage to appear triumphant over the violent and barbaric Muslim.

The term "hostage" has come to have a very specific cultural connotation in the aftermath of the highly-publicized 444-day "Iranian hostage crisis" in 1979-81, when the American embassy was taken over by people identified as Iranian "students." Due to the length of the period (during which 52 American members of the embassy staff were held prisoner), the poor handling of the "crisis" by Washington, and its intense media coverage, the incident had a strong impact on
American public opinion. The episode was framed as "America held hostage" by the US mass media, which depicted the entire nation as being victimized by "Islamic terrorists" (see Larson, 1986; Mowlana, 1984; Said, 1981; Altheide, 1981). The defeat of president Jimmy Carter in the 1980 American presidential elections was attributed to the inability of his government to bring the hostages home (Sick, 1986: 375). Becoming wary of the consequences of giving a "hostage crisis" too high a profile, the Reagan administration attempted to downplay the hostage-takings of Americans in Beirut during the 1980s. However, even that government's attempts to deal secretly (and clandestinely) with Tehran caused much grief with the discovery of the "Iran-Contra" connection (Marshall, Scott and Hunter, 1987). When the regime of Saddam Hussein refused to let Western expatriates leave Iraq following its invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, the Bush administration was reluctant to call them "hostages," as was the Canadian government four years later when its peacekeeping soldiers were held by Serb rebels in Bosnia. The term has come to be seen as a double-edged sword that can severely wound governments that use it.

Whereas official discourses have become loathe to describe nationals taken prisoner abroad as "hostages," the dominant and populist discourses use it to highlight tensions between Western governments and Muslim groups. For example, in 1989 the US Council for Energy Awareness, a nuclear energy lobby group, ran a full-page print advertisement depicting an arm holding an automatic rifle (looking like a Kalashnikov) whose breech had been replaced by what looked
like a small oil barrel labelled "FOREIGN OIL." The caption asked,
"AMERICA'S NEXT HOSTAGE CRISIS?" and concluded by stating:

We can help America from being held hostage and maintain our energy independence by relying more on our own resources, like nuclear energy.

The notions of being held hostage and depending on foreign oil have become so clearly linked in dominant American discourses with Muslim groups that the advertisement did not need to mention "Muslim," "Islamic," or "the Middle East" to communicate these meanings.

Like the "Iranian hostage crisis," the kidnapping of a series of Americans and other Westerners by Islamist groups in Lebanon from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s also occupied the attention of the mass media. The abductions were placed within the interlocking cognitive models of the clashes between "Islam" and the West, terrorists and governments, and barbarism and civilization to make the long drawn out saga interesting for audiences. During this period there were a number of hijackings which resulted in varying lengths of abductions (the next chapter analyzes the coverage by Maclean's of one such incident in 1985).

However, the most enduring of the hostage episodes were those involving kidnappings of Westerners from the streets of Beirut: the names of some of the hostages became legendary - Terry Waite, Terry Anderson, David Jacobsen, Thomas Sutherland, Martin Jenco. Collectively and individually, they represented the heroic Western victim of the "Islamic terrorist."
Kidnappings regularly take place around the world; however, the international mass media seemed to focus primarily on the abductions of Westerners by Islamist groups in Beirut - the kidnapped Americans and Europeans came to embody the notion of "Hostage" in dominant discourses. Canadian newspapers appeared to be getting their cue on this issue from American news services, with coverage of the saga seeming almost parallel in both countries. Among the other kidnappings that received some reporting between 1985 and 1991 included those of an Ecuadorian president by "paratroop commandos," an American missionary by "Moslem gunmen" in the Philippines, a Swiss tourist and his Filipino female companion by "pirates" in the same country, the daughter of a Lebanese millionaire by Spanish and French "professional criminals," an Italian businessman and his grandson by "Kidnappers Inc.," a Spanish millionaire by "Basque separatists," a French woman and her three daughters by "a radical Palestinian group," fourteen Colombian, West German, French and Swiss officials and journalists by "Colombian guerillas," a former Belgian prime minister by "real professionals" including a "Yugoslav," a Colombian political leader by "eight hooded men," the daughter of an Italian industrialist by "small industrialists," and eight Israelis by "separatist militants" in Kashmir. Among the Canadians reported abducted abroad during this period were an engineer by "Colombian guerillas," a nun by "rebel gunmen" in Lesotho, two businessmen by "gangsters" in Brazil, and two tourists by "armed Cuban refugees." But the occasional space given to these and
Illustration 4

Construction of the hostage.
A history of hostage-taking

1985
- The Rev. Lawrence Leaue, once abducted in Band
- Amnesty letter Band issued, two for cable
- Newspaper article in May
- Terry Anderson, father of slain hostage
- Los Angeles Times
- Elza Anderson, father of two hostages

1986
- American University, one in Europe
- American University, one in Europe
- Japanese hostage
- Los Angeles Times
- Terry Anderson,
- Los Angeles Times
- Elza Anderson
- Los Angeles Times

1987
- Angol TV, "terrorist act"
- Los Angeles Times
- Elza Anderson
- Los Angeles Times

1988
- Bush's use of term 'hostages' has serious ramifications
- By Jim Mann and Douglas Jehl
- Washington Times
- "I'm not going to do anything that would put..." George Bush acknowledged

1989
- Los Angeles Times, "terrorist act"
- Los Angeles Times
- Elza Anderson
- Los Angeles Times

1990
- Colombian 'peace' group holds 70 as hostages
- Bogota, Colombia (UPI) — More than 100 armed people seized the headquarters of the Armed Catholic Church and took about 70 people hostage Wednesday, demanding the church try to end a wave of violence in the country.
- Members of the group, some of whom took their children, were the Latin American Spokesmen for Peace, including two bishops, according to a spokesman for the group.
- "Colombia's War and-peace negotiations staff are serious..."
other abductions paled in comparison to the sustained coverage by Canadian mass media to the Beirut hostages, especially the American and British ones.  

Lebanon in that period, more than any other place, provided the stage for the enactment of the technological myths of the Nation and the Hero - it was a location where the Western hero/victim battled the chaos resulting from the breakdown of the institutions of the nation-state. Kidnappings in other countries of Westerners, even those by Arab or Muslim groups, did not seem to attract as much attention as those in Beirut because they apparently did not provide such a sharply-outlined mythological backdrop against which to portray the battle between good and evil. There were occasional reminders that many non-Western people who had disappeared from the streets of Lebanese cities were still unaccounted for and were likely also languishing as prisoners, but the scale of this coverage was minuscule compared to that of the men from the United States and Europe who had been abducted.  

When lists of those kidnapped in Beirut were published in the print media they did not even make a passing reference to any Lebanese, reserving the term "hostage" for foreigners - mostly from the West. British news correspondent Robert Fisk asked in his *Pity the Nation: Lebanon at War*:

... why was it that Western hostages were called 'hostages' - which they were - while Lebanese Shia Muslim prisoners held in an Israeli-controlled jail in southern Lebanon were referred to by journalists simply as 'prisoners'? These Lebanese were also held illegally, without charge and - according to one of the militia leaders who controls their lives - as hostages for the good conduct of their fellow villagers in southern Lebanon. (1991: 435)
A table in The Montreal Gazette titled "Hostages in Lebanon" included nine Americans, six Frenchmen, two West Germans, three British men, one South Korean, one Irishman, one Italian, one Indian, and one "Unidentified" person (22/6/87: B1). In addition to the American Terry Anderson and the Englishman Terry Waite, Maclean's, in its April 30, 1990 issue, gave brief accounts about 12 other Americans and Europeans under the headline "HOSTAGES TO TERROR" (40-42). And "A history of hostage-taking" in The Ottawa Citizen (10/8/91: B4), which chronologically listed various abductions, seemed to imply that hostage-taking in human history began in 1985 in Lebanon and that its victims were mainly Westerners. At the release of the last of these men, The Montreal Gazette published an article by Louis Salome of the Cox News Service, reminding readers that "Saudi diplomat was first of 99 hostages" (5/12/91: A18). The article's penultimate paragraph did mention that

Lost forever in the madness of Lebanon are the thousands of Lebanese Christians, Muslims and Jews who were kidnapped during the civil war that lasted from 1975 until October 1990. However, it did not refer to them as "hostages."

Ironically, the Canadian press, in publishing accounts of hostages in Beirut usually neglected to mention Henriette Haddad, who held dual Canadian and Lebanese citizenship and whose family and friends maintained that she had most likely been kidnapped while on a visit to Beirut in 1985. The story did not break until the fall of 1991 since the family had believed until then that her life would be jeopardized by publicity.39 However, even after coming to light, this case was not
followed by the Canadian mass media like they had those of the American and European men. The 64-year-old Mrs. Haddad's story does not seem to have provided the dramatic edge that invokes the clash of civilizations - despite having a Christian background, she was part of both the West and the East. She did not appear to rate a mention in the articles on the release of Westerners from Beirut in December 1991 - apparently because, like so many of her fellow Lebanese victims of kidnapping, the dominant discourses did not see her as a "hostage."

Whereas kidnappers from the various Muslim groups were often referred to as "Islamic terrorists," Christian groups who carried out abductions or hostage-takings do not seem to have ever been termed as "Christian" terrorists or kidnappers, either in Lebanon or elsewhere. For example, in reporting on the discovery by Italian police of a sect called the "Apostles of Christ" which was involved in kidnapping, shootings, and bank robberies, journalists refrained from using the word "Christian." Similarly, members of a Colombian group called "Christians for Peace and National Salvation," which held 42 hostages, were consistently referred to only as "protesters." To indicate their religion would have interfered with the manichean cultural constructions of kidnapper/terrorist and hostage.

America the Innocent

The terrorism of Islamist groups against Northern targets is rarely discussed in the context of the North's intrusions into Muslim societies, which the
former frequently cite as reason for their actions. Massive military and financial support by the West for Israel, which has engaged in severe repression of Palestinians and Lebanese, is topmost among the grievances of militant Muslim groups against the West. A member of a terrorist organization holding Western hostages in Lebanon asked a visiting American Muslim:

"... who is the terrorist? Your government, which has supported Israel to kill some 20,000 Lebanese and Palestinians and wounding some 30,000 of us and destroying one-third of southern Lebanon? Or the hostage-holders who have captured a few individuals, limited their freedom of movement and contact with the outside world, and yet feeding them and taking care of them as much as possible? The American government was the greatest terrorist in the world," he said, "notwithstanding the fact that America kills in a 'civilized' way, dropping its bombs by the most sophisticated airplanes, and notwithstanding that those decisions are made in a democratic way by the majority of the people and the decisions to give those airplanes to Israel are also made by Congress in a democratic fashion ... (Mehdi, 1988: 77)

This reasoning rarely appears in the dominant media coverage of "Islamic terrorism." The outrage of Arabs and Muslims against the American government's support for Israel's repressive actions against the Palestinians and Lebanese receives little coverage in the international mass media. Such resentment towards Washington is relatively recent in origin according to Walid Khalidi (1988: 777). The United States, unencumbered with a colonial past unlike Britain and France, was looked upon favourably in Arab public opinion. However, since emerging as a global power in the post-World War II era, it has increasingly tilted in favour of Israel and against the Arabs, thus largely alienating the latter.
The systematic violence of Israel and support for it from Western powers often became invisible in the discourses on "Islamic terrorism." The connection in Arab opinion between the Western arming of Israel and Israeli oppression of Arabs seemed to be lost on Western perceptions of the conflict. It was inexplicable, therefore, that Arabs should take Westerners as hostages in their fight against Israel. Furthermore, even though Israel held hundreds of Lebanese and Palestinians whom it had removed from Lebanon, these people were not seen as hostages in dominant discourses. Upon freeing British hostage John McCarthy, "Islamic Jihad" indicated in a letter why it was holding Westerners. While it was rare for such material to be published in the mass media, The Toronto Star did print most of an English version translated from the original Arabic. It read in part:

... the question of the detainees [i.e. the Western hostages] was a reaction on the part of Muslim freedom fighters to all those [Israeli and American] practices and an endeavour to secure the release of our incarcerated fighters. This action will continue as long as they remain incarcerated. (13/8/91: A11)

As far as the group was concerned, both sets of prisoners were "detainees" and deserved parallel consideration.

Coverage of an incident in August 1989, in which Israel kidnapped a leader of the Hizbollah, a Lebanese Shia group, illustrated the tendency of North American mass media to see Middle Eastern issues mainly from one point of view. The Ottawa Citizen carried a story in which another leader of the Hizbollah, Sheikh Fadlallah, was quoted: "I am ready to help free the Western hostages provided Western countries help release Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners in
Israel" (12/8/89: A6). However, the article did not state who or how many Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners there were, instead moving on to focus only on the return of Western hostages. A backgrounder by Holger Jensen in Maclean's on "The Deadly Party of God: Hizbullah Threatens the West (14/8/89: 28)" dwelt largely on the violent actions of the organization rather than their causes. The only hint of Hizbollah's opposition to American hegemony came in the final paragraph: "Hizbollah's manifesto says that the 'roots of evil are in America'." No attempt was made to explain this statement: instead it was used to imply a fanatic and irrational antagonism towards the West. Youssef M. Ibrahim of the New York Times did touch on the Lebanese resentment over American support of Israel; however, even he couched it within the political wrangling of various Middle Eastern powers (6/8/89: 4-1). The headline of an editorial in the same issue of the newspaper seemed to promise some understanding of the situation: "The Moment to Free All Hostages" (6/8/89: 4-20). But the text made it clear that "All" did not include Arab hostages in Israel, only the Western ones in Lebanon. Once again, the violence of Israel carried out against Arabs was rendered invisible (see Law, 1989: 60-61).

The actions of the United States and France to prop up the Phalangist-dominated government of Lebanon in 1983 also caused much resentment among the opponents of Phalangists, leading to the massacre of hundreds of American and French soldiers by truck bombers. At a time when adherence in the country to the technological myth of the Nation was tenuous, Western powers had come to hold together an essentially lopsided political arrangement made by the former colonial
power, France, which had given the upper hand to a demographically shrinking group. A long cover-story by William E. Smith by Time magazine headlined "Carnage in Lebanon" (31/10/83: 8-21) attempted to describe what had happened. The lead paragraph described how a quiet Sunday morning had been shattered when "Suddenly a truck, laden with dynamite, on a fanatical suicide mission crashed into the building's lobby and exploded ..." (8). The first few pages narrated the incident in Beirut and the reaction in Washington. Then the article considered the possible suspects, scanning the political landscape of Lebanon, inquiring about possible motives each might have had to carry out the acts. It stated that the "primary effect of the marines' presence in Lebanon has been to provide backing for the fledgling government of president Amyn Gemayel" and that "Other Lebanese factions have resented the Marines for their backing of the Christian-dominated government" (15-16).

In the aftermath of the massive American causalities (147 dead) Time seemed to be more willing than usual to look at the role of Israel in precipitating the unstable situation in Lebanon, although not until the last page of the long write-up.

The Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon forced thousands of Lebanese Shi'ites to flee to the slums of Beirut. The dispossessed Shi'ites, along with Palestinians and the increasingly radicalized Lebanese Muslims - all of them egged on by the Syrians - have made for an explosive mixture. One lesson to be drawn from the present turmoil is that Israel's refusal to compromise on the Palestinian issue has created a chronic and festering crisis in the region. Says William Quandt, a Brookings Institution fellow who served on the National Security Council
during the Carter Administration: "Israeli military activity over the past five years turned a problem into a catastrophe." (21)

The article went on to note that the experience of the Syrians and the Israelis had shown that "attempts by outsiders to dominate Lebanon tend to end in failure, if not disaster. This need not apply to the US, whose aims in Lebanon are very limited, but it raises questions about the wisdom of a policy that is not precisely stated" (ibid). Thus, according to the American newsweekly, while the involvement of others in a third nation was harmful, that of the superpower was benign: it just needed to have a clearer (imperialistic) policy. The lengthy article was based on the cognitive model that presented the United States as a force for good in the world, fighting all kinds of fanaticism. Closure was achieved by invoking a sense of the tragic: despite the gentle giant's good intentions it had suffered great injury and bewilderment.

As of Sunday evening, long after darkness had fallen over Beirut, Americans were left with the stunned knowledge that their young men, who had volunteered for duty in a faraway land that many of them would never understand, were gone. Whatever the details of duty and diplomacy, the marines had been in Lebanon to try to hold that country together, to stand for peace and order in a place that has known neither for a decade. They had represented an antidote to fanaticism - and fanaticism had brought them down. (Ibid)

"Islamic terrorism" had foiled the attempt of the superpower to "hold that country together" in the form that it was created by a colonial power (France, whose soldiers had also been killed in a simultaneous attack).

The instability of the South becomes a reason for integration propagandists to urge the continuation of the armaments build-up. Even before the Soviet threat
began to diminish, astute mainstream journalists began to look for other
justifications to keep the American military-industrial complex functioning at full
steam. Seeking alternative justification for the "Star Wars" project, William Safire
of the New York Times in an article that was republished in The Montreal Gazette
(16/10/84: B-3) brought up the scenario of "nuclear terrorism: "The real threat of
the future may not be from "a rational superpower" but from "fanatics in the
Middle East ... the Third World War may not be the Soviet Union verses the free
world, but terrorism versus civilization." One could engage in diplomatic relations
with a rational dissident but not with an irrational barbarian who did not subscribe
to civilized norms (Rosow, 1990). In a survey of predictions by scholars "about
what life will be like for the next generation," a Maclean's article said,

Some experts ... expressed that the growth of Islamic
fundamentalism may ... represent a threat to the world at large.
Dalhousie [University]'s [Denis] Stairs said that Islamic
fundamentalism, which rejects the Western scientific view of man,
may be prevented by its very nature from "being accommodated to
the engines of the modern world." As a result, some Islamic groups
may suffer from alienation and turn to extreme forms of terrorism.
(11/9/89: 49)

Having decided that there exists a coherent entity such as "Islamic fundamentalism,
which rejects the Western scientific view of man," the international affairs "expert"
does not seem to believe it even worth the trouble to attempt to establish a
dialogue with "Islamic fundamentalists." It seems more comfortable intellectually
to adhere to the script of absolute "otherness" with which the gap cannot be
bridged. An article by New York Times writer Craig R. Whitney, titled "Terrorism unleashed" and reprinted in The Ottawa Citizen, stated,

"The nature of terrorism is entirely different in the 1990s than it was in the 1970s ...," said John Christie, the British publisher of the Gulf States Newsletter, which has extensively examined the phenomenon. "What you have now is a unique threat from Islamic fundamentalist groups, supported by Iran and other countries, that want to turn the clock back. They are fanatical, they see the West as evil, and they have unlimited access to money." (23/8/94: A7)

In creating such a dark image, one wonders whether the likes of John Christie and Denis Staïrs are not just as fundamentalist and fanatical in their apparent insistence in seeing all Islamists as evil and whether they are helping to sustain a mirror-image of "the Great Satan."

The interpretation of "Islam" by some Islamists leads them to believe that their religion provides the justification, indeed, the incentive to attack people and property in ruthless manners. And their faith appears to make them fearless even to the point of being self-sacrificial. However, to refer to them as "Islamic terrorists," "Islamic extremists," or "the warriors of Islam" reduces the religion to the narrow readings of a small proportion of its adherents. It takes away from a large part of some one billion Muslims the ability to practice their faith without being tainted with the violence and conflict that some Islamists have imposed on "Islam." In any case, this is not the only religion that has some followers who insist on burdening it with their own belligerency. Apart from Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism, even the civil religion of the state has fanatics who go beyond the bounds of humanity to pursue what they believe is best for the nation. This has often involved violence
(both direct and structural), which in some cases, has been of such savagery that the survivors among its victims have come to refer to some governments as sources of evil. The involvement of the United States in numerous conflicts abroad and its arming of various states, some of whom have unleashed barbaric violence, has earned it the title of "the Great Satan" among certain groups in Iran and Lebanon. The mirror-images that such Muslim and Northern societies have of each other are constructed in accordance with their respective historical and cultural perspectives. Inter-cultural communication between them remains problematic as long as the Other is viewed as the only transgressor and the Self as completely innocent.

Notes

1. The conference "was attended by fifty statesmen, scholars, and journalists from a dozen countries" (Netanyahu, 1987: x). Among those who made presentations were leading Israeli and American politicians such as Yitzhak Rabin, Moshe Arens, Yehuda Z. Blum, George P. Schultz, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, and Edwin Meese III.

2. See his The Jews of Islam (1985) and Semites and Anti-Semites (1986). Also see his Race and Slavery in the Middle East (1990), a republication of an earlier work, for its purpose of debunking the perception that "Islam" promoted inter-racial harmony. Edward Said writes about him: "Lewis is an interesting case to examine further because his standing in the political world of the Anglo-American Middle Eastern Establishment is that of the learned Orientalist, and everything he writes is steeped in the "authority" of the field. Yet for at least a decade and half his work has in the main has been aggressively ideological, despite his various attempts at subtlety and irony. I mention his recent writing as a perfect exemplification of the academic whose work purports to be liberal objective scholarship but is in reality very close to being propaganda against his subject material." (1978: 316).

3. Bernard Lewis is not unfamiliar with Jewish history; see his History - Remembered, Recovered and Invented (1975). According to Gabriel Weimann, "One of the earliest documented examples of a terrorist organization is the Sicarii, a religious Jewish sect which was active in the Zealots struggle in Israel in 66-73 A.D." (1986: 10). In recent times, the movement founded by the militant rabbi Meir Kahane has been involved in terrorist incidents in the United States and Israel. In 1983, Jewish groups were deemed responsible for the largest number of terrorist incidents in the United States by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (Terrorist Research and Analytical Center, 1985). Yet, it was "Middle-East/Mediterranean terrorism," carried out mostly by Arab groups, that was selected by editors as the lead

4. Cf. Daniel Easterman's novel The Last Assassin (1991) is among the more recent publications which have revived the story to construct a global threat coming from the present-day successors of the "Assassins."

5. Netanyahu was born in Israel and immigrated to the United States as a child; he subsequently returned to Israel. Prior to his appointment as Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations, Netanyahu was the deputy head of the Israel's embassy in Washington, when he was even more unrestrained in speaking about the inherent Arab "propensity to violence." Karen Seidman, "Arab 'Propensity to Violence' at Root of Middle East Conflict: Israeli Envoy." The Montreal Gazette (27/2/84: A4).

6. See Graves (1951: 70-78), and Young (1951: 188-204). This view was revived in Samuel Huntington's (1993) scenario that brought together communist China and Muslim countries in an alliance against the West. Arnold Toynbee remarked that "Communism has been called a Christian heresy, and the same description applies to Islam as well" (1953:18).


8. Since the attack actually took place on the night of April 15, the issue had most likely gone to press before that time. For a discussion of the manipulation of information by the Reagan administration to justify the bombing of Libya, see Chomsky (1987: 113-50). Also see Mathes and Auer (1989).


10. In a later novel titled Our Game (1995), Le Carré placed Chechens in the role previously held by Palestinians. It seems that current news readily provides villains who are Muslim.


12. A similar tendency was demonstrated in press narratives about the murder-suicides of 53 members of the Order of the Solar Temple in Quebec and Switzerland in October 1994, which seem to have begun with the ritual killing of a baby feared to be "the Antichrist" (The Ottawa Citizen, 19/11/94: A3).


14. For the inappropriate use of this term, which frequently leads to the polarization of attitudes among the conflicting parties, see Mowlana (1984: 80-81).

15. Safire (1990), and Mann and Jehl (1990).


17. For the distinctions between official, dominant, and populist discourses, see Karim (1993b).

18. For a selection of writings by former Western hostages in Beirut, see Weir (1987), Glass (1990), Jacobsen and Astor (1991), and Waite (1993).
19. According to Richard Lapper and Georgina Power, "From 1972 to 1985 the number of kidnaps recorded by the US state department increased fourfold. Forty years ago, 20 countries were affected. Now there are more than 60." (1987: 38)


30. Charles Richards (The Independent), "Italy scores one against kidnappers," The Ottawa Citizen (21/4/90: A14).


35. Reuter, "Cuban hijackers threatened to kill Canadian tourist," The Ottawa Citizen (24/6/91: A5).

36. Laurence Zuckerman, associate editor of the Columbia Journalism Review, made the case for the press to keep the Western hostages in Beirut in the limelight in a July/August 1986 article. Whereas many front page articles had appeared about the Western hostages in Canadian newspapers, there was massive coverage of the release of the Terry Waite on November 19, 1991 and that of Terry Anderson on December 5, 1991, including lead stories, editorials, columns, analyses, and backgrounders. A survey by the International Institute of Communications of the news broadcasts of 87 television channels in 55 countries on November 19, 1991 indicated that the release of Thomas Sutherland and Terry Waite the previous day had dominated the air waves (The Economist, 8/2/92: 94).


39. Portia Priegert, Canadian Press, "Mother held hostage in Lebanon, son says," The Ottawa Citizen (26/10/91: A5); George Tombs, "Where is Canada's forgotten hostage?" The Toronto Star (20/12/91: A25).

40. Reuter, "Italian religious sect linked to killing and kidnapping." The Ottawa Citizen (30/5/88).


42. Interestingly, the government spies and anti-terrorist operatives have been termed as "true believers" in some discourses; cf. Steven Emerson, "Capture of a Terrorist: The Hunter and Her Witness," The New York Times Magazine (21/4/91: 57), and "True Believers," The New York Times Book Review (30/6/91: front cover).
Chapter 8

Covering a Hijacking
Drama and Ritual

Reportage of a hijacking carried out by a Muslim group allows for the study in this chapter of discourses on "Islamic terrorism." Analysis of texts involves the demystification or deconstructions of contradictions that exist within it. These contradictions may not be easily apparent; indeed, it is the purpose of propaganda to conceal them. Narratives are framed within society's myths. One therefore has to penetrate the basic assumptions of a text before challenging the information presented. Propagandists may not admit or even themselves be conscious of having preferred interpretations of events. Unwitting bias is difficult to establish, but it can, nevertheless, be detected in how the media operate - in identifying who is granted the status of "authorized knowers" (Winters, 1992: 40) or accredited witnesses, the assumptions of questions asked, the analytical concepts which serve to link events to causes, what passes for explanation (Hall, 1973b: 88), and even in what may be considered newsworthy.

Textual analysis of news coverage can be greatly aided by deciphering its dramaturgically and ritually-coded material. In addition to the exploration of the explicit content of the text, dramatistic and ritual analysis also delves into the layers of implicit meanings that reside in the news. Some dramatistic analysis has been carried out in previously in this dissertation. Ritual analysis has three major perspectives, according to David Chaney: "First there are rituals which are to be reported; secondly, there are ways of reporting which are themselves rituals; and thirdly, the medium itself may be a ritual or collective ceremony" (1985: 4). All
these elements of ritual analysis are relevant here.

Four issues of Maclean's which intensively covered a hijacking of an American airliner by a Muslim group in 1985 have been chosen for this case study for several reasons. First of all, the incident was of a sufficient length to provide enough material on the development of the "crisis" and not so long and diffuse like the ongoing Beirut hostage takings that it becomes difficult to scrutinize its coverage in a comprehensive manner. Rather than peruse newspaper reportage, the weekly was chosen in order to have a manageable body of material for a qualitative study of a limited scope. Owned by Maclean Hunter Limited at that time, the weekly newsmagazine was only one of the numerous holdings of the media empire that controlled companies across Canada, US, Britain, Italy, France, Austria, Switzerland and West Germany (Dun, 1984: 253). It was therefore integrated into the Western media networks as well as in the dominant position of elite Western countries in the global order of nation-states, and consequently had a stake in the preservation of that order. The conglomerate's 12 American holdings gave it a strong reason to identify with the elite nation's when broader interests of the superpower were threatened. Canada also has historical, cultural, economic, military and political ties with its southern neighbour. And when the elite nation's interests are attacked by a sub-national group in a developing country with whom Canada elites have tenuous links, the newsmagazine's constructions of the event tends to favour the US (Soderland, Wagenberg and Pemberton, 1994). Like most Canadian mass media, Maclean's subscribed to the global media narratives which
determine the hegemonic placing of particular countries and groups of people in hierarchical orders. This analysis will study the magazine's cultural role in contributing to the consensus of dominant Northern discourses on "Islam" and on violence.

In styling itself "Canada's Weekly Newsmagazine," Maclean's appears to act as an organ of national integration. As David Chaney (1985: 4) notes, "the medium itself may be a ritual or collective ceremony." Along with other "national" Toronto-based media such as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the Canadian Television Network and The Globe and Mail, the magazine seems to want to present the image of a singularly united Canadian confederation whose interests can be represented by having correspondents placed in key geographical points. This tendency belies the regional and cultural differences in the vast, multicultural country. One of the most obvious shortcomings of Maclean's as "Canada's Weekly Newsmagazine" is that none of its material is in French, one of the Canadian nation-state's two official languages (although in 1995 it began to publish a limited number of issues in Chinese).

Whereas weekly newsmagazines by definition do not conform to the 24-hour news cycle, they necessarily operate in a newsworld where computer networks, television, radio and daily newspapers determine the pace of information dissemination. The longer production processes and intervals between consecutive issues of weeklies make their contents prone to greater redundancy, and as a consequence they aim at providing lengthier and more analytical reports of current
events. Nevertheless, the rites of news production remain largely the same as those of the more regular mass media with similar forms of routinized newsgathering and dissemination being in operation.

"Habit and Instinct"

In June and July 1985, *Maclean's* covered the hijacking of a TWA airliner. The newsmagazine's production team immediately swung into action upon seeing early reports of the event. Editor Kevin Doyle stated:

> Writers, editors, designers and others *acting out of habit and instinct*, worked to prepare a cover story on the rapidly unfolding events and their profoundly troubling ramifications ... Associate Editor Jared Mitchell wrote against a four p.m. Sunday press deadline to complete the main story from correspondents' reports and background information provided by Chief Librarian Roberta Grant. But by early afternoon it was clear that no one could possibly foresee the developments - let alone the outcome - of the affair. As a result, we decided to do what a newsmagazine can do best: *explain why* the tragic *epic* was unfolding (emphasis added). (*Maclean's*, 24/6/85: 2)

Doyle freely admitted, indeed boasted, of his crew's ability to act as a team and routinize its reaction to unexpected occurrences anywhere in the world. As Gaye Tuchman (1978) has shown, the process of news production is turned into a routine and a ritual by newpsersons who impose modes of operation that order newsmaking into a regulated, day-to-day activity. Even though this was not a daily newspaper there was still a deadline to be met, and the saga could not be concluded but was to be continued in the following week. At that point, Doyle stressed the interpretive role of the newsmagazine.
It is interesting to note that the hijacking was already being constructed in dramaturgical terms: it was an "epic." Possibly alluding (consciously or unconsciously) to the Mediterranean location of the drama, epithets and mythological images flowed thick and fast in the narratives that followed. The 17-day incident was reported in four issues of *Maclean's* - those dated June 24, July 1, July 8 and July 15. The space and number of articles devoted to the hijacking varied widely from week to week: June 24 - four pages, two articles, and an editorial; July 1 - nine pages, six articles, plus the cover; July 8 - three pages, and one article; and July 15 - two pages, and one article. Whereas four write-ups were collaborative efforts by correspondents, stringers and editorial staff, six were individually authored. Even in the latter case, the editor would ensure that the writing agreed with the magazine's overall framing of the series of occurrences. The following analysis of the coverage by *Maclean's* of the TWA hijacking generally adheres to David Chaney's observation that "there are ways of reporting which are themselves rituals" (1985: 4).

The newsmagazine's writers ritually framed information about events to fit the dominant cognitive model regarding such situations. Several themes were immediately apparent in their reporting of the hijacking:

- the randomness and irrationality of terrorism;
- "international terrorism" threatened Western civilization;
- Lebanon was a chaotic and divided society;
- the terrorism in Lebanon was "Islamic";
America prepared for just retaliation.

The notions of the randomness and irrationality of terrorism were imparted by the publication through several narrative techniques: by framing the incident in a mythological-like context, by dwelling on the supposed fatalism of the situation, by personalizing the issues, and by mystifying the terrorist groups.

In *The Many Faces of the Hero*, Joseph Campbell notes that before the protagonist of a myth enters and exits the temporal and spatial dimensions where s/he faces trials, s/he has to cross symbolic (but mandatory) thresholds. These boundaries are usually indicated in a narrative by certain images which signify transitions into another time and/or space (Campbell, 1972: 77-89). The narration by *Maclean's* in the June 24 issue opened with:

*Ordinarily*, Trans World Airlines flight 847 is a short two-hour connector run between Athens and Rome. Indeed, last Friday's flight *began as usual*, with the plane's eight crew members greeting their 145 passengers for the pleasant two-hour crossing over the blue Mediterranean. *Then, shortly after the Boeing 727 lifted off the runway at Athens International Airport*, gunmen carrying 9mm pistols and Mills hand grenades stormed the cockpit threatening to blow up the aircraft ... *With that, Flight 847 began a frightening odyssey around the Middle East ...* (emphasis added) (24/6/85: 22)

It appears that as soon as the plane left *terra firma* and moved towards the heavens, it entered into a kind of "dream time." passing from the concrete world into a mythological space, to set the stage for another re-enactment of the primordial battle between good and evil (Eliade, 1954). The journey became an "odyssey" like that of the heroic Odysseus who also faced his trials travelling across the Mediterranean. Interestingly, the caption of the lead photograph of the
airplane read: "TWA Flight 847 on the tarmac at Beirut's airport ..." It was not a Boeing 727 but "Flight 847" which was said to appear in the picture: the physical characteristics of the object had been overshadowed by the usually ephemeral "flight" in which the plane remained trapped.

We speak of "terrorist space": airports, embassies, fractile zones, non-territorial zones. The embassy is the infinitesimal space in which a whole country can be taken hostage. The plane, with its passengers, is a parcel of land, a wandering molecule of enemy territory, and therefore almost no longer a territory, therefore a hostage already, since to take something hostage is to tear it from its territory and revert it to the equilibrium of terror. Today this terror is our normal, silent condition everywhere, but it materializes more visibly in orbital space, the sidereal space that everywhere now hovers our own. (Baudrillard, 1990: 38).

A July 8 article quoted a passenger describing the 17-day event as "Fellini-esque" and "surrealistic." The journalistic narrative portrayed the hijacking as an event that removed the aircraft and its passengers to a dream-like place where nothing was normal. Like Jonah trapped in the belly of a whale, the passengers strived to escape from the plane, ritually enacting the drama that established their heroic status.³

Upon the release of the American passengers at the end of the incident, there were reverse boundary rituals of traversing exit thresholds that had to be related as the heroes returned from their trials. Most American hostages held in the Middle East had to pass through the US military base in Wiesbaden, Germany. Before they could return home they underwent what amounted to a ritual cleansing: "Then the men moved to the nearby US military hospital at Wiesbaden
for voluntary medical check-ups and de-briefings" (Maclean's, 8/7/85: 36). The mandatory coverage of these purgative ceremonies appear to fall into Chaney's initial category of the ritual analysis of the media: "First, there are rituals to be reported" (1985: 4).

Apart from re-enacting the heroic trial through abduction, the mythological framework also highlighted what was viewed as the basic irrationality of terrorism. The unwilling heroes/victims were thrust into battle with foes who were evil and did not abide by the rules of normal existence. Focusing on the tribulations of the hostages, the narrative paid scant attention to the political, social and cultural causes which led to the hijacking.

Another theme that appeared in the magazine's coverage of the hijacking was that of the conspiracy of "Terrorism International" against the civilized world. The title of the lead story in the first issue reporting the incident signalled how terrorism was going to be treated by the magazine. "A free-for-all week of terror" (24/6/85: 22-25) framed together the hijacking of the TWA airliner with a previous takeover of a Royal Jordanian Airlines jet by "Shi'ite gunmen" who demanded "that Palestinians abandon the Beirut camps"; the seizing by "a lone Palestinian gunman" of a Middle East Airlines plane; the explosion of a car bomb in West Beirut; the kidnapping of an American in the city; and the release of "21 Finnish soldiers belonging to the United Nations peacekeeping force" held captive by the "Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army" (which was predominantly Christian but was described in the article as "Shi'ite") - without looking at the distinct roots
of each occurrence.

In the following issue of *Maclean's*, other incidents that had taken place in various parts of the world were also placed under the all-embracing rubric of "international terrorism":

[US President] Reagan issued a blunt warning to the hijackers [of the TWA airliner] - and the world: "The war which terrorists are waging is not only a war against the United States. It is a war against all civilized society ...

**Wounded:** Indeed, while the hijackers were parading their hostages for the world's press, terrorists on three continents confirmed the President's point. In San Salvador left-wing guerillas sprayed an outdoor cafe with machine-gun fire and killed 13 people, including six Americans. In Frankfurt a new terrorist cell calling itself the "Arab Revolutionary Organization" claimed responsibility for a huge airport explosion that killed three people and wounded 42. In Nepal the death toll reached eight from a series of terrorist bombings in Katmandu and three other towns.

**Disasters:** Terror also struck on two other fronts during the weekend. In Tokyo, 358 passenger and 16 crew members escaped injury, but two baggage handlers died when a luggage container exploded after a Canadian Pacific Boeing 747 landed at Narita airport from Vancouver. And off the Irish coast, a grim search began for 325 passengers and crew members aboard the Air India's Bombay-bound flight 182 from Toronto and Montreal. (July 1, 1985: 16)

The entire global system of nation-states thus seemed to be under sedge by the many-headed hydra named "terrorism." No attempt was made to discuss the different causes of the various incidents that took place in the week between the two editions of the newsmagazine. On the contrary, the intention appears to have been to provide examples that "confirmed the President's point" that there was a co-ordinated wave of senseless world-wide violence aimed at the foundations of
international order.

Whereas the mass media may often contradict government statements, there is a high degree of alignment of views on issues such as terrorism. Indeed, Philip Elliot's definition of journalistic rites harks to the ancient belief that sacred power is imbedded in authority: they are a rule-governed activity of symbolic character involving mystical notions which draws the attention of its participants to objects of thought or feeling which the leadership of the society or group hold to be of special significance. (1979: 147)

On the other hand, he says, forces threatening the status quo are described in dark and mysterious terms. Therefore, the selection of quotations from national leaders and those who imperiled order in nation-states was carried out in manners which buttressed dominant media discourses.

Although, according to the editor of Maclean's, one of the newsmagazine's functions was to "explain why the tragic epic was unfolding" very little inquiry was carried out into the reasons for Americans to be targeted by Lebanese hostage-takers. Apart from referring to attacks in Beirut on the US marine compound and embassy in 1983 no mention was made of the history of American military actions in Lebanon before those events: the 1956 landing of US marines in the country; the American military, political and economic support of Israel, which invaded Lebanon in 1982; the propping up in 1983 of the contested leadership of Amin Jemayel by American marines who were ostensibly on a peace-keeping mission; the suspected widespread involvement of the CIA in the region; and the aerial and
naval bombing of Lebanese targets in 1983 by US forces. Reassessment of the evolving situation, as required by the myth of History, was not carried out by Maclean's. On the other hand, in adherence to the myth of Science, the newsmagazine's coverage implicitly endorsed the continuing legitimacy of the 40-year old covenant of the nation-state of Lebanon.

Rites of Personalization

Personalization was a key feature in the weekly's cultural construction of the hijacking. Instead of dealing with larger issues, such as the historical relationship between the two nations, the spotlight was instead placed squarely on individuals - the hijackers, the hostages, the political leaders.

Regularly, newspapers make news values salient by personifying events. Of course people are interesting, can be vividly and concretely depicted in images, they possess qualities and so on. Personalization, however, is something else: it is the isolation of the person from his relevant social and institutional context, or the constitution of a personal subject as exclusively the motor force of history, which is under consideration here. Photos play a crucial role in this form of personification; for people - human subjects - are par excellence the context of news and feature photographs. (Hall, 1973b: 183)

The cover illustration of the July 1 issue (similar versions of which simultaneously appeared on the covers of Time and Newsweek) showed "TWA pilot John Testrake with gunman at Beirut airport" under the title "THE PAWNS OF TERROR." It was an iconographic and thus highly usable image of terrorism - depicting the weary, unshaven captain in the cockpit of the airplane with one of
Illustration 5

The cover pages of the July 1, 1985 issues of *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *Maclean's*. 
America Under the Gun
The Struggle Against Terrorism

TEN WAYS TO FIGHT TERRORISM
When to retaliate—And Now
Does TV help or hurt?

The Pawns of Terror
Agitating over the Beirut hostages
The risks of rescue
the hijackers in the shadowy background holding a gun. This was a picture of the heroic leader (who goes down with his ship in popular lore) as a prisoner of an evil terrorist, depicted lurking in the dark. That the protagonist was a White male from the West and the hijacker a dark-skinned "Islamic terrorist" reinforced the mythological portrayal of the struggle between good and evil.

News photos claim implicitly to witness the actuality of an event and enhance their medium's claim to journalistic objectivity. In supposedly being able to represent reality with visual accuracy they provide support for mythological/ideological notions. "By linking the completed sign with a set of themes or concepts, the photo becomes an ideological sign ... the text is crucial in 'closing' the ideological theme or message" (Hall, 1973a: 185). Maclean's used certain obvious methods to close the ideological content: editorial comments were placed in the second parts of photo captions, and sub-headings in the text also served to lead the reader. For example, the caption of the picture illustrating the funeral rites for Robert Stetham stated, "Burial ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery for murdered navy diver Robert Dean Stetham: the bravest man"; and a sub-heading printed in bold letters reiterated: "Brave" (1/6/85: 18).

The myth of the Hero is closely allied to the myth of the Nation in the integration propaganda of the modern state. The hero is usually presented as an upholder of national virtues or as suffering the trials of the entire nation. This personification of the nation-state aids in encouraging citizens to further their identification with it. In this manner the integration propagandist distracts their
attention from the larger imbalances and injustices in society. "The propagandist nurtures the myth of the Hero because he knows it is impotent in fact but powerful in image - he knows that the individual alone can never alter the base of the capitalist state" (Szanto, 1978: 50).

The primacy of the military hero in American folklore had been eclipsed from the mid-1970s to the late 1980s in the aftermath of the failed US intervention in Vietnam. During this period, the hostage seemed to have appropriated this position (Arno, 1984: 8-9). It was the victim of evil kidnappers, facing the trials of the mythological hero, who was made to look heroic through the mere survival of his ordeal. Captain Testrake combined in himself the potent symbolism of the hostage/victim and the leader/hero facing a crisis situation. He had already become a key figure for those readers of the magazine who had listened to the radio and television broadcasts of the hijacking. Maclean's wrote of his "tense but calm" voice relating "a shocking description of a terrorist next to him in the cramped cockpit" (24/6/85: 22, 23).

Testrake, however, seemed to be relegated to the back seat by the newsmagazine when he began to urge caution to the American government: the image of the courageous hero appeared to be dimming. The hero is useful to the propagandist only in so far as he reflects the ideals that are in the interests of the hegemony. It is also interesting to note that another passenger, Allyn Conwell, who acted as the spokesperson for the hostages was also kept out of the limelight; whereas the American media, displeased with his apparent sympathy for the Shia
groups, were attributing this behaviour to "the Stockholm syndrome" Maclean's chose generally to disregard him. Philip Elliot tells us that in "the human interest accounts of incidents and their aftermath people are portrayed acting our their roles with their appropriate emotions as prescribed by the norms and traditions of their culture" (1979: 161). Inappropriate behaviour is criticized or screened out.

Another aspect of the personalization rite is to dwell on the fatalism of the situation: to ponder on the question "why did this happen to innocent bystanders?" Ian Austen's piece in the July 1 issue, "Death of an American boy." is a clear example of this tendency. Twenty-three year old Robert Stetham, the US navy diver who was killed by the hijackers, was described as "just the kind of kid you'd like to have as your son" - an all-American boy, raised in a leafy Maryland suburb, a straight arrow, proud of his family, his profession, his country" (25). The message was that he was an inappropriate, unfair target - in the navy, but a mere "boy" performing a non-combatant "profession." (Stetham was actually a member of the elite commando unit, the Navy Seals, which carries out underwater demolition.) We see here the skilful synthesis of Jacques Ellul's secondary myths of the Nation, the Hero, Work and Youth: a professional diver performing his national duty died heroically in the flower of his youth.

No mention was made by Maclean's of the sustained bombing by the USS New Jersey of Lebanon in 1983, which may have been a major cause of Stetham's murder at the hands of the hijackers (Mehdi, 1988: 84). Instead, the aim was to highlight the irrationality and randomness of the act and to transform the victim into a hero. "U.S. Vice-President George Bush declared that the young petty
officer was a victim 'of a cruelty that knows no boundaries and a barbarism that selects the blameless for punishment'" (ibid). The terrorists were shown to act as popular lore demands they should and a fellow female passenger was quoted describing the young American officer "as the bravest man she had ever met" (ibid). Only the images of an absolute nature were appropriate in the cultural rites of relating the war between good and evil.

"Islam Versus the West"

The coverage by *Maclean's* of the TWA hijacking was placed within the familiar cognitive model of Muslims threatening Western people and property in a religiously-inspired frenzy that is the antithesis of the West's rationalism and order. At stake is the West's domination of global political and economic systems, which "Islam" is portrayed as threatening. While the Muslim groups and individuals who use violence are labelled "terrorist" and some Muslim countries have also been placed on the US State Department's list of "terrorist states," the American government's own efforts to destabilize other nations and assassinate leaders are benignly disregarded by Western integration propagandists (Chomsky, 1992). Contrary to exploring the historical and political causes for the militant reaction of some Muslims to the North, particularly the United States, it is simpler to mystify the situation by veiling it in the time-honoured image of "Islam" as the embodiment of violence and barbarism. This form of depiction is familiar, and perhaps even comforting, to audiences used to seeing the age-old relationship between Christian
and Muslim societies as essentially a conflictual one. The entire colonial experience and the current resentment of overwhelming Northern cultural, economic and political dominance are often underplayed, generally being attributed to a medieval disdain for modernity among Muslims.

Operating within this frame, the title of a June 24 profile of the hijackers, all of whose demands were non-religious, was "Islam's Holy Warriors" (24/6/85: 25). This was followed by a longer piece in the following week's edition on "The radical origins of Islamic terror in Lebanon" by Carole Jerome, "a Toronto journalist ... completing a book on the Iranian Revolution" (1/6/85: 21). Two photographs and their respective captions closed the basic themes of the article: one showed "Lebanese Moslems praying toward Mecca: Shi'ite militancy and a generational gap" and "Amal fighter: inspired by the Ayatollah" (20). The first picture was typical of those used by various Northern publications to portray increasing Muslim religious fervour - a simple act of prayer was recoded as evidence of "Shi'ite militancy." This mode of logic, disregarding the social bases for the acts of violence by Muslims, attributes them primarily to the religious feelings. The commonly-viewed irrationality of religious fervour in dominant discourses fits in well with the supposed irrationality of terrorism.

However, upon a close reading of the actual demands of the hijackers, which Maclean's characterized as "forbidding," it becomes apparent that the former were really protesting against the violence that they saw being perpetrated in their country:
The hijackers issued a forbidding list of demands: the release of 700 Moslem prisoners in Israeli jails; international condemnation of Israeli armed forces' behaviour in southern Lebanon before the troops' recent withdrawal; similar criticism of U.S. support for Israel and of a March 8 Beirut car bombing which killed 80 people and which some Moslems allege was carried out by a group trained by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. Finally, they demanded an end to four weeks of fierce fighting between Lebanese Shi'ites and Palestinians in refugee camps on Beirut's southern edge as well as continuing clashes between Shi'ites and Druze militiamen. (24/6/85: 23)

The above appeared in the initial issue covering the hijacking; these details of the demands were not repeated in the following three editions, which concentrated mainly on the hostages, the various Shi'ite groups and American reaction. Pertinent issues were thus buried in the speculations of "experts" and "officials," reducing the incident to just another hostage-taking by "Islamic fundamentalists" in the Middle East.

The relatively fresh journalistic model of "America held hostage" that had become the rallying cry of the US media during the Iranian hostage-taking in 1979-81 appeared to provide the dominant frame for what was happening in Lebanon in the summer of 1985. In the July 1 issue of Maclean's, the seemingly impotent position of President Ronald Reagan was compared to that of his predecessor, Jimmy Carter, who had occupied the White House during the previous incident. And the leader of the Shi'ite Lebanese group Amal was put in the shoes of the former Iranian foreign minister, Sadegh Gotbzadeh, who had been viewed as a "moderate" in the Iranian government. A distinct demonology emerged in the various articles on the Shi'ite groups in Lebanon. Occupying the nether extremes
was the "shadowy" Islamic Jihad (24/6/85: 25), which remained incognito but had claimed responsibility for several violent incidents. Slightly less mysterious was the Hizbollah which was among "the most radical Shi'ite factions" (ibid). A notch higher was Islamic Amal, which along with Hizbollah "operates out of Syrian-controlled Beka'a Valley in eastern Lebanon ... Both are dedicated to the creation of an Iranian-like Islamic republic in Lebanon, and both are generously funded by Tehran" (ibid). Association to what dominant discourses had deemed as evil governments served to discredit further the Lebanese groups, while making them appear as puppets of external forces and being without genuine grievances of their own.

Then there was the more "secular," "nationalistic" Amal led by the "soft-spoken," "pragmatic," "moderate" and Western-educated Justice Minister Nabih Berri (1/7/85: 24). More importantly, he had endorsement from the American government: according to White House spokesman Larry Speakes, "Berri is a leader of standing in Lebanon. He has the ability to make the release possible" (ibid: 18). Nevertheless, the "pro-Syrian" Amal was only the best of a bad lot. Its second-in-command Akef Haider dispenses the Shi'ite version of sweet reason in fluent French, English and Lebanese [sic - Arabic?]. Immaculately dressed, scarcely perspiring in the fetid, overcrowded basement of Berri's fortified headquarters, Haider discourses with equal ease about the difference between the Cartesian set of Western mind and the more fluid, abstract thinking of the Arabs ... Berri and Haider are the public faces of Amal. Around them is a shadowy power structure of religious, political and military leaders backed by the omnipresent gunmen in black T-shirts and green combat pants, who are walking arsenals of handguns, automatic rifles, grenades and rocket launchers. (Ibid)
Amal's deputy commander was made out to be definitely dangerous if not somewhat unhuman and devil-like - he spoke too easily and did not even sweat! And behind the façade lay the "shadowy power structure" which was dark and violent. This was the picture of Lebanon in a state of anarchy.

The American government, on the other hand, in accordance with the myth of the Nation, was shown in the four *Maclean's* articles on the hijacking to be working in an orderly manner with clearly-defined hierarchies of various administrative structures. There were frequent references to "the President," "the White House," "the Secretary of State," "Pentagon officials," "U.S security experts," and "agents of the CIA" who "resolve," "withstand pressures," "urge," "pledge," "request," "believe," "deplore," "express confidence," "sustain," "appeal," "retaliate," and "deploy." Whereas the "hijackers," "radical Shi'ite factions," "Shi'ite terrorists," "Iran-inspired terrorists," "mysterious, deadly pro-Iranian movement," "militant sect," "splinter groups," "accomplices," "captors," "ecstatic supporters," "shadowy groups," "disciples," and "holy warriors" seemed to "chant," "harangue," "allege," "demand," "undermine," "violate," "seize," "kidnap," "assault," "attack," "muscle [aside]," "take over," "destroy," and "murder."10

Therefore, whereas the officialdom of the elite nation-state was depicted as being stable, legitimate, rational and justified in its actions, the Shia groups who opposed the Lebanese government were portrayed as anarchical mobs who were blood-thirsty, power-hungry and fanatical. "Weighing the risks of reprisal" in the
July 1 issue (22-23) discussed the debate in America about the options of "retribution"/"reprisal" (not revenge) and negotiation, sustaining the impression of a careful and rational process as opposed to the emotionalism that was the preserve of "Islamic terrorists." These allusions were visually reflected in the photographs illustrating the article: its lead picture, which showed "The U.S. aircraft carrier Nimitz deployed off the coast of Lebanon" (18), clearly spoke of the glamour of high technology and of disciplined formations that were apparent in the sleek, straight lines of the vessel and its state-of-the-art warjets. Another photograph of the "Burial ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery for murdered navy diver ..." (ibid) in the same issue depicted uniformed American navy personnel performing military funeral rites in a disciplined fashion, depicting order and honoured tradition. On the other hand, pictures of "Shi'ite gunmen in Beirut" (16) portrayed a motley group of bearded men in no visible formation and without a common thread of clothing between them, reinforcing notions of their illegitimacy as a military force.

Finally, the American government had to be shown preparing for righteous retribution against those who had incurred its wrath. "Targeting the Terrorists" in the July 1 issue was a panegyric to the "American Special Operations D - the elite squad better known as Delta Force" (25). In the aftermath of the failure of regular American forces in Vietnam, these smaller, highly-trained and well-equipped units appeared to have donned the mantle of the military hero. Such commando groups have a legendary status in martial mythology since the Second
World War: they exhibit unique capabilities and supreme courage, succeeding where larger military formations fail, and are often credited with changing the course of a battle in favour of the "good side." We are told by Maclean's that the "mission impossible' professionals" of Delta Force were recruited from the cream of the American military to "undergo demanding training courses in skydiving, underwater reconnaissance and instruction in how to kill an enemy silently in unarmed combat" (ibid). They used the latest in high technology, which even allowed them literally to see through walls, further enhancing the image of these veritable supermen.

It has become obligatory in recent times to depict military heroes working in close relation with sophisticated armaments, so much so that the weapons (or technology in general) sometimes themselves assume the role of the hero. The romantic image of the soldier who fought expansionist wars in the name of the national homeland using largely rudimentary weapons expired in the First World War,

battling appropriately enough a too powerful military technology. Heroes of all nations lost out and died; technology was the only victor. The mid-twentieth century hero fought with liberal/conservative technology as his ally, or he failed. He was subservient to the hegemony, structurally its servant, and his forms of actions were built from components of the myth of Work. The James Bond form of hero, who serves the hegemony and utilizes its technological products in his heroics, is the most successful. (Szanto, 1978: 58)

Complete mergings of the human hero and technology have also occurred in television and film characters of the "Bionic Man," "Bionic Woman," and
"Robocop" as well as the android "Data," Star Trek's human-like robot character. Contemporary society's belief in the myth of Science is at the bottom of these fictional characters' popularity - they take the place of the mythological heroes who fought evil with assistance from divinity. As Ellul indicates, the feelings inspired by the propaganda based on technological myths are akin to religious emotions (1969: 251-52).

The Canadian magazine's portrayal of the US Delta Force was carried out within this contemporary cultural framework (cf. Newsinger, 1983). In adherence to the secondary myths of the Hero, Youth, Work, and the Nation, these highly skilled soldiers - selected from the best of American youth - used the products of industrial work to perform their patriotic duty. However, the attempt was made to dissociate them from past failures and instead link them to victorious military squads and incidents in the international "war against terrorism":

Delta Force is no longer the loosely formed unit that led the abortive 1980 helicopter mission to rescue American hostages in Iran ... [it is] modelled on Britain's Special Air Services [famed for its victory against Middle Eastern hostage takers - and is] believed to have secretly played roles in several success operations, including the 1983 rescue of Gen. James Dozier from the hands of the Red Brigades terrorists in Italy. (1/6/85: 25)

But despite its superior abilities this was a disciplined force that only acted when the American people sanctioned, through their democratically elected president, that these commandos carry out their legitimate violence.

Declared a former CIA officer: "there will be pressure on the President to hunt the terrorists down and kill them. Delta Force is up to that job. (Ibid)"
The elite nation-state had to be constructed by Northern integration propagandists as a strong yet just entity that acts in a rational and correct manner set out by a popularly chosen leadership. The Canadian publication did not question the right of the American superpower to intervene in another country, chaotic as it was, to seek revenge.

What Alternatives?

The coverage of the TWA hijacking by *Maclean's* was broadly similar to that of the American mass media. A quantitative study of the reportage of the event by the American television networks ABC, CBS, and NBC revealed that topics which most often involved hostage stories were those topics about the plight of the hostages and U.S. government reaction to the crisis. Little attention was focused on less dramatic topics such as [the] history of Lebanon and conditions which may have given rise to the TWA hijacking. (Atwater, 1988: 7)

The American newsweeklies *Time* and *Newsweek* had coverage that largely corresponded to that of *Maclean's*. While the American magazines devoted more space than the Canadian weekly to the hijacking, qualitatively, the reporting was very similar. The same themes of "Islamic" barbarism versus Western civilization, the heroism of the navy diver Robert Stetham and of the airline captain John Testrake, the irrationality and randomness of terrorism, the correct responses of the United States and Israel, the infighting among the Lebanese Shi'ite groups, and the American military's preparations for "retaliation" appeared in *Newsweek* and *Time*. Headlines included "An Odyssey of Terror" (*Newsweek*, 24/6/85: 18-19),

Since a national news medium may "itself be a ritual or a collective ceremony" (Chaney, 1985: 4) that continually reaffirms national values and re-enacts the common myths of the citizenry, is it possible for the population of a country to receive alternative views of events occurring in a culturally alien region of the planet? Despite advances in technology, the nature of global information structures (Mowlana, 1986: 35-40) make it difficult, although not impossible, for Northern publics to have efficient access to the media products from the
developing world. Recent years have seen the rise of alternative media in the West that are largely produced by immigrants from Africa, Asia and Latin America. These may aid in gaining perspectives not available in the mass circulation media. (Information on computer networks, although frequently drawing on mass media content, also provides access to some non-dominant discourses.)

A brief examination of the reporting of the TWA hijacking by The Middle East and Arabia magazines provides a useful comparison with Maclean's presentation. The former monthlies published in London were easily available in North America in 1985 (Arabia is now defunct). Both were owned by former Middle Easterners; although, apart from its Editor-in-Chief, the staff of The Middle East was mainly Western. Scanning through the June, July and August 1985 issues of these newsmagazines, it becomes immediately apparent that the story which had monopolized the attention of Western mass media had been of secondary consequence to them. The major topics in The Middle East and Arabia were the role of Syria in Lebanon and the siege by Amal of Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. However, the two magazines had vastly differing views on these matters.

The Middle East's cover story "What's left of Lebanon?" revealed the slots into which it put the various participants involved in the conflict in the country. Israel, the United States and the Phalangists were the villains in this publication's scenario, while Amal, the Druze militia and Syria were portrayed in a more favourable light. The piece by Beirut correspondent Jim Muir and Political
Editor Judith Perera opened with "Death and destruction, misery and massacre are the obvious legacy of Israel's three years in Lebanon ..." (June 1985: 21). The "excesses of [Phalangist military leader] Geagea and of the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA) ... have led to retaliation by Shiite and Druze militias ..." (22). The Israeli invasion was also seen as being responsible for exacerbating the "intense sectarianism" and obliging the communities to "assert themselves" (ibid).

The newsmagazine depicted Shia militias as reacting to years of repression:

The eventual explosion of Shiite power was inevitable after the suffering inflicted, first during the Israeli bombing of the mainly Shiite southern suburbs of Beirut, and then in the Phalangist repression which followed, when many Shiites were harassed, detained and abducted from their homes at night. The process of radicalisation was completed when the army tried to bomb the southern suburbs into submission to Main Gemayel's government, at that time working closely with the Americans. (Ibid)

Similarly, the Druze were also shown as "being prodded into self-assertion by the excesses of the [Phalangist-dominated] Lebanese Forces" (ibid). Thus began the "fracturing" of the national army along sectarian lines, according to The Middle East. The "moderate" image of Nabih Berri, in contrast to the other "fundamentalist" Shi'iites, reappeared here:

It was with great reluctance, therefore, that Nabih Berri, leader of the Shiite movement Amal, finally called his followers out of the Lebanese army in Feb. 1984. He had little choice. The forces of fragmentation were irresistible, and there was a power vacuum in the streets. If Berri had not acted, more radical Shiite groups like the pro-Iranian Hizbollah could have gained sway. (22)

The bias is clearly apparent, but the critical North American reader could glean a wealth of information about the political situation in Lebanon unavailable in such
mass media organs as *Maclean's*, *Time*, or *Newsweek*.

It is also noteworthy that *The Middle East* spoke of the possible inauguration of a "new order" and the sweeping away of "political institutions based on a confessional system" (21). We find in this a significant ideological difference from the major media, which do not even hint at a possible reformulation of the Lebanese state structure in their strict adherence to the myth of Science. But it is ironically the Shi'ites - the villains in the mass media's dramaturgy - who found it in their interest to bring about Lebanon's reunification, according to *The Middle East*. They, unlike the Maronites or the Druze who had carved out largely autonomous cantons for themselves, were scattered throughout the country and found it physically impractical to break away from it.

The primary frame within which the magazine placed the internal problems of Lebanon was the role of Syria as the emergent regional power. It was Syria which would usher in the new Lebanese order, which had chosen the victorious Amal and Druze militias as allies, to which Phalangist forces were currently performing a "symbolic genuflection," and whose "pre-eminence in Lebanon is now grudgingly acknowledged even by Israel and the United States" (Aug. 1985: 22). This frame was even more obvious in the article "Assad's secret war" that dwelt on the Syrian president's use of proxies in Lebanon. The write-up by Judith Perera stated that "Syria is now anxious to 'close the Lebanon file', after 20 years of skilfully manipulating local forces to assert its influence ... (and) turn more of its attention to the wider Middle East scene ..." (17). (This view was contrary to those
of the Western mass media which often warned about Damascus's secret strategy to re-create "Greater Syria" that would include Lebanon as well as other parts of the Levant.)

The August article in *The Middle East* implied that the many-tentacled Syrian government may even have been responsible for the TWA hijacking, which it eventually helped end. Without giving names, Perera wrote,

sources point out that the original hijackers belonged to Islamic Jihad, a group which many in Lebanon believe to be a cover for Syrian operations, even though they are usually attributed to Iran. (19)

Far from being a condemnation of Damascus, the "great Syrian conspiracy" is made out by the political editor of the newsmonthly to be "an oblique tribute to Syria's success" (ibid) in the region. This contrasted remarkably with coverage of the hijacking by *Maclean's*, in which Syria was hardly mentioned in the four issues under study.

Another article in the August edition of *The Middle East*, written by Magda Abu-Fadil in Washington, was critical of American media's portrayal of Shi'ism and Arabs. In "Ron-bo takes on the Shiites," she complained about the "spate of anti-Shiite jokes" by television comedians and disc jockeys who "fuelled the flames of hatred" (19). But "the most visible sign of anti-Shiite and anti-Arab sentiment" was the view that "the Shiite mullahs of Iran, linked to the terror network in Libya and Syria, are the main threat to Western civilisation" (20), wrote Abu-Fadil. She remarked that
there has been no shortage of analysis by self-appointed experts on terrorism, Islam and Shiite tendencies. Views have ranged from calls for diplomatic negotiations to free the hostages to denunciations of all Shiites as savages and bloodthirsty barbarians. (Ibid)

On the other hand, she quoted a former US ambassador to Egypt, a director of "hemispheric studies," and a syndicated columnist, both of whom warned about the dangers of Washington's ignorance regarding "Islamic fundamentalism" and who criticized the Reagan administration for joining "the bandwagon of Arab-bashing during the TWA hijacking episode" (ibid).

The piece by The Middle East's Washington correspondent, looking at American reactions to the hijacking from a Middle Eastern point of view, attempted to hold up a mirror to North American society. Even though the writer utilized only those pieces of evidence that illustrated her argument, she provided an alternative way of looking at the incident. Statements paddling against the forceful current of integration propaganda were highlighted by Abu-Fadil and were made available for readers searching for information other than the dominant discourses of the mass media.

In contrast to The Middle East's secularist perspective, Arabia, which styled itself as "The Islamic World Review," took a definitely religious stance on reporting events. Its July and August issues focused on the fact that Muslims in Amal and in the Palestinian refugee camps were fighting against each other. It treated religious leaders - the names of some of whom rarely appeared in Western mass media - as primary sources for quotes. "Fallout from the camps explosion"
in the July 1985 issue was a four-page piece largely based on the discussion of the situation by religious figures. A distinction, however, was made between the points of view of Sunni and Shi'ite leaders by the monthly's unnamed "special correspondent."

The Sunni perspective was shown to be that which uniformly deplored the fact that Muslims were fighting Muslims. A Sunni religious leader was quoted as lamenting that Amal's siege of Palestinian camps was a cause for

"celebration for the Phalanges and Israel, because Muslims are voluntarily killing Palestinians in their camps." He described it further as "a terrible act, shameful in terms of our history, culture and values. It is a new era, of deterioration and collapse of our Islamic values and fraternity." (36)

The conflict was viewed here in terms of the "deterioration ... of ... Islamic values" rather than as a power struggle between co-religionists of two nationalities. (Arabia seemed to downplay the fact that Palestinian refugees in Lebanon included Muslims as well as Christians.)

On the other hand, Arabia was critical of the views of a prominent Shia leader, Sheikh Mohammed Fadlallah, who had proposed that the problem be dealt with in terms of "Palestinian political realities" (ibid). In contrast to Fadlallah's implied support for Amal's actions, the magazine presented contrary views of another Lebanese Shia source, the Islamic Jihad, and an Iranian Shia leader - both of whom were critical of Amal. The monthly spelt out its own position in "Amal in the political front line?" (July 1985: 37), where it fundamentally disapproved of the Shia-based movement for the very reasons that Maclean's and The Middle
East considered it "moderate." Arabia lamented the fact that Amal "has a sectarian structure with little concern about its members' Islamic commitments" (ibid).

Western readers looking for a religious perspective on the Lebanese situation would have thus found Arabia's approach useful, while being aware of its obvious tendencies to favour certain views.

The TWA hijacking shared only half a page of the four-page spread on Lebanon in the July issue of Arabia. The unsigned "Who's human? ... and whose rights?" read like an editorial on the American reaction to the incident. According to the newsmonthly, the positive fallout from the hijacking was that it focused the world's attention on the Arab prisoners in Israel. It also criticized what it saw as the Americans viewing their side of the matter in terms of the need for more security at airports and more suppression of Muslims. Yet if there are any sensible people left in Washington, priorities should focus on more concern for justice and the display of firmness against the extreme militarism that is subsidised exclusively by the US. The Americans cannot foot the bill for Israel's Lebanon War, and even increase aid to Israel, and at the same time expect to escape the blame for the atrocities they have paid for. (June 1985: 34)

These sentiments, which were commonplace in many quarters of the Middle East, were rarely presented to Western audiences in the mass media. Exposure to alternative media such as Arabia would have broadened the understanding of some of the root causes of terrorist attacks against Westerners in the region.

Arabia's editorial column, "Fathi Osman on Reflection," was revealing of the basic position taken by the magazine on terrorism. In the August issue, the
editor attempted to view the legitimacy of the use of force in the "Islamic" context. He wrote that the appearance of terrorism in the contemporary world had coincided with the simultaneous growth in the "oppressive power of modern governments" (Aug. 1985: 9). Osman cited Koranic verses which, according to him, indicated that while it was permissible to defend oneself against evil, "requiting evil may, too, become an evil: hence, whoever pardons (his foe) and makes peace, his reward rests with God ..." (ibid). He stated that rules of war were applicable when force to achieve justice becomes necessary ... [A] legitimate fight for a legitimate cause should be limited to the combatants or the forces which are responsible for the aggression or oppression. According to the teachings of Islam, children, women, priests and monks, peasants and all peaceful civilians as a whole have always been secured from having to face any military assault. A Muslim is bound to the laws and ethics of Islam in jihad, and is also bound to reason and common sense in figuring out the relative effectiveness of any plan. (Ibid)

Osman further illustrated Koranic disdain for the use of force by relating a parable from the life of Moses, who is revered as a major prophet in Islam. According to the editor, the "use of force is the last resort of oppressed Muslims when all other reasoning and peace means fail" (10). Arabia’s interpretation of Islamic scripture contrasted remarkably with the monolithic images of "Islamic fundamentalism" prevalent in Northern mass media. Through its narratives readers could learn of the heterogeneous nature of Muslim groups and individuals and that, as in other religions, doctrine is used by different "Islamic organizations" to justify a wide variety of positions.
Residents of the North seeking factual information about current events in Lebanon do have accessible to them a range of sources that present a variety of - though not all possible - views. In order to arrive at a picture truer than that available in any one source, one can pit the cultural constructions presented in various media against each other in a dialectical fashion. Such an exercise may reveal factual omissions, generalizations, contradictions, and even distortions. Slanted openings of articles, strategic sequencing of information, specific narrative styles, consistent application of negative or positive parts of speech to particular persons or groups, quoting only certain types of authority figures, favourable or unfavourable allusions, the use of particular photographs - the stuff of mystification - may become transparent to audiences when juxtaposed with variants. A medium's or an individual journalist's predilection for a positivist, Marxist, secularist, or religious stance may also become more apparent and enhance one's own reading of the situation and of its reporting.

In attempting to understand the position of "Islamic terrorists" one would ideally have either to discuss the issue with them or analyze material produced by them. Primary materials composed by "Islamic terrorists" are difficult to obtain due to their editing or suppression by dominant media. The latter are an integral part of the nation-state and international systems, which are the ideological foes of most terrorist organizations. In so far as the mass media subscribe to the established order they present terrorists as illegitimate actors in the political arena, whose pronouncements and ideological treatises have to be mandatorily framed in a
negative light. Dominant discourses also tend to avert their eyes from the massive structural and direct violence perpetrated by powerful states. The rationales that various groups of terrorists provide for their violent actions are therefore usually disregarded or their symbolic content is scrambled. Integration propaganda's deafening roar ensures that their message goes unheard.

Notes

1. "Demystification means clarification, and something more as well: demystification suggests that a process, occasionally conscious though more often not, has taken place earlier and has actively confused the nature of a social situation, and its literary depiction, for the benefit of a specific part of the society a part which turns out to be its dominant class." (Szanto, 1978: 179).

2. Journalists often referred to the conflict in Lebanon in dramaturgical terms; for example, an article on the various groups involved in the ongoing fighting, published in a previous issue of Maclean's, was headed "The performers in a recurring tragedy" (19/9/83: 29), and another in The Ottawa Citizen, on the release of an American hostage from captivity was titled "Beirut's a stage: Western hostages become tragic actors in cruel theatre of the absurd" (23/4/90: A6).

3. Abduction in a large vessel appears to be a strong myth in various cultures. Among the beliefs into which it seems to have been translated in contemporary times includes the kidnapping of people in UFOs. Survey results have shown that "One of every 50 American adults - some 3.7 million people - believe that they may have had an abduction experience with an unidentified flying object" (The Globe and Mail, 18/5/92: A15).

4. The latter action is especially significant for understanding the background to the TWA hijacking. The murder of the American navy diver Robert Stetham, the only passenger to be killed, was carried out by Ali Hamadie. "Hamadie was from a Lebanese village shelled by the USS New Jersey and the village and its inhabitants were killed and wiped out" (Mehdi, 1988: 84).

5. For a listing of research demonstrating the tendency of dominant discourses to racially code heroes and villains, see Signorelli (1985).

6. Compare this with the narratives of The New York Times about another incident in October 1985, in which members identifying themselves as members of the Palestinian Liberation Front hijacked the cruise ship Achille Lauro and killed Leon Klinghoffer, a 69-year old Jewish American who used a wheelchair. According to Jack Lule, an important theme in the newspaper's coverage was "... the portrayal of the victim as good, innocent, and heroic... Leon Klinghoffer was described as 'a determined man' who fought hard to recover from his stroke. The son-in-law called him 'a devoted husband, a loving father and a good friend.' A friend said, 'He was an unbelievably gentle man.' A neighbour testified, 'He always smiled, and he'd say hello.' And a niece was quoted: 'All he talked about was family and love' (Lule: 9-10).
7. Among the more recent initiatives of Washington was approval in late 1995 of a funding package of $18 million to support covert action by the CIA to overthrow the government of Iran (Corn, 1996: 3-4).

8. It is noteworthy that while the people whom the Shi'ite groups were holding were consistently termed "hostages" or "victims," the larger number of Lebanese who had been spirited across the Israeli border in contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention on prisoners of war were called "prisoners" or "detainees" (these constructions are discussed in Chapter 7).

9. When Western mass media label a leader of another country a "moderate" it is usually understood that he is pro-Western, while "extremists" tend to be critical of the West.


11. For example, the Patriot missile was referred to as a "war hero" during the Gulf War (The Ottawa Citizen, 23/1/91).

12. Although this military unit was not deployed in Beirut to rescue the hostages, a 1986 Hollywood film called "Delta Force" was "a take on the 1985 TWA hijacking which showed the Arab terrorists destroyed by American commandos" (Anis, 1996: 28).

13. There are similar American magazines currently on the market such as The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs and Minaret. Computer networks such as the World Wide Web also allow access to a broad range of sources of information about Muslim societies.
Chapter 9

Religious Strife as Journalistic Script
The Jihad Model

A dominant cognitive script within which journalists couch international stories present various religions as being at odds with each other. Post-Cold War constructions of "Islam" as the Other have manifested themselves in particular mass media rituals. Apart from general presentations of Northern and Muslim societies as diagonally opposed to each other in culture, values and ideology, the imagined world-wide confrontation between the two is often related by journalists within the religious strife script.¹ This cognitive structure dramaturgically portrays various peoples of Christian and Muslim backgrounds engaging in religious conflict against each other around the world. Dominant constructions of Christian-Muslim conflict by the avowedly secularist Northern mass media has generally involved the portrayal of the Christian as the victim and the Muslim as her/his victimizer, as in the coverage of the Nagorno-Karabakh region of the Central Asian country of Azerbaijan. In the cases where the facts clearly indicate that the reverse is true, i.e. Muslims are victims and Christians are victimizers, the religious conflict script either completely disappears or is mitigated. Whereas "Muslims" were the primary victims in the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, "Serbs" - not "Christians" - were the villains; on the other hand, when Lebanese "Christians" carried out the 1982 massacres in Sabra and Shatila (Beirut), "Palestinians" - not "Muslims" - were the victims. The religious strife script has also usually been dropped when larger ideological purposes appear to be at stake, as when covering the Central Asian involvement
Illustration 6

Muslims, Christians, Sunnis, Shi'ites, Palestinians, Israelis in Lebanese drama.
53 killed as Moslems, Palestinians clash in west Beirut

Sunn Moslem faction crushed
Amal militia leader Berri says

BEIRUT (AP) — The leader of the Sunni Moslem Amal militia says he
was.Nome Moslem leader
by the killing of a Sunni Moslem leader
who was killed in fighting in Beirut and a
harrowing account of a battle in which
some political and religious leaders
were among those killed in the bout.

N O B B D Y S
HEROES

Palestinian deportees
have popular support,
but no powerful allies

By Sam Hopkins

Infusion of Islamic zeal threatens to revitalize PLO

Shiites ambush an Israeli-backed militia

BEIRUT (AP) — Slender Moslem
guerrillas in Lebanon are reportedly
have killed or wounded 12 Israel-
backed militiamen in a battle in
which one of the guerrillas was
killed. The battle was a part of a
conflict between the Israeli-backed
militias in Lebanon and the PLO
forces in the area.

Palestinians loot towns abandoned by Christians

BEIRUT (AP) — Palestinians
have been seen looting towns
abandoned by Christians

In Beirut, Israeli soldiers are re-
occupying the roads and districts previously
occupied by Shiites.
of Turkey, a country with a largely Muslim population but which is also a member of NATO.

The modern state, according to the technological interpretation of the myth of the Nation is the most rational way to organize politics and is not moved to action by "irrational" religious notions. Whereas power struggles in the North are usually seen as "ideological" or "political," most conflicts in the "barbaric" Southern parts of the world are to be attributed to "ancient tribal, religious, or ethnic hatreds" (MESA, 1987: 89). The validity of the nation-state which assumes sovereignty for a particular group of people within artificial borders is rarely brought into question in dominant political discourses. While ethnic factors may be highlighted in explaining specific "Third World" conflicts, the framework of choice is that of religious strife. Particular struggles which have complex economic or social causes are often reduced to "Christian-Muslim," "Hindu-Muslim," "Sunni-Shia" and "Sikh-Hindu" conflicts by integration propagandists. This does not require much ideological labour in the cases where Muslims are involved due to the primacy of their image in the North as a people generally prone to irrational, fanatical impulses.

The religious conflict script seems to be considered by journalists as self-evident, not requiring explanations of why a particular war should be considered religious. When engaged in conflict, contemporary Muslims are generally seen as driven by an irrational hatred as opposed to the scientific rationality that is the mark of the modern Northern civilization. Technological society, adhering to the
myth of Science, promotes the idea that truth - and ultimately, utopia - is to be achieved through scientific progress. The editor of the Toronto-based *John Kettle's Futureletter*, which forecasts socio-economic trends, wrote:

Science has taken on much of the role of religion, offering a different kind of truth, truth that is open to proof rather than faith. In the west it is a noble pursuit to challenge existing truth, whereas in Islam and other fundamental [sic] religions it is blasphemy to challenge dogma or revealed truth ... Since the world is obviously going to have to deal with Islamic fundamentalism a long way into the future, it should be accepted that, legally and socially, Islamic countries like Iran are roughly where Christianity was at the time of the crusades ... and the inquisition ... There is certainly no point in expecting them to act like secular humanists. (1/3/89: 1-2).

While the writer did state that scientific "truth" was open to challenge, he failed to point out that the fundamental premises of the myth of Science are rarely questioned in dominant discourses.

In a rare media analysis of the use of religious language by both sides in the Gulf War, Ian Buruma surmised that "Our own world is not as secular as we might think" (1991: 9). Whereas the "Islamic" symbolism of the secularist Saddam Hussein, well-known for his persecution of Muslim religious leaders, unabashedly exploited the religious sentiments of Muslims, similar appeals to the divine were also made by Northern leaders (as discussed in Chapter 4). This form of rhetoric has a venerable tradition:

One might think back to the spirit of the Great War, which was soaked in religious imagery. The actual aims of that war were fuzzy at best. But the noble sacrifices made for King and Country were likened by poets and journalists to the sacrifice of Christ. *Pilgrim's Progress* was often invoked: The King ... commanded the ... Shinning Ones to go out and take Ignorance, and bind him
hand and foot, and have him away.' And just as Saddam Hussein tried to whip the Shia Muslims into a rage by accusing infidel bombers of destroying holy sites, the Germans were rumoured to have desecrated such sacred idols as the holy Virgin of Albert. This is almost echoed by the CNN reporter in the Pentagon who called the Iraqi attack on Israel 'blasphemy', because it took place on the Sabbath. (10)

Such an accusation of "blasphemy," when used by Northern propagandists, is hardly ever portrayed in dominant discourses as being irrational or fanatical, but merely as part of the cultural norm.

The religious strife script is a popular journalistic mode of explaining conflicts between combatants who happen to be Christian and Muslim.

Commenting on an Iranian call "on believers everywhere to come to the defence of their brethren in Bosnia" an Ottawa Citizen editorial remarked

"the cross versus the crescent" seems archaic and out of place - but it is a far more dynamic and powerful force in world affairs [than the North-South divide]. (31/6/92: A8)

Such a perspective promotes the view that conflicts in which Muslims are involved are primarily motivated by religious differences. It reduces wars that are political, economic or territorial in nature to jihads merely because Muslims are involved. No attempt need be made to explain why such a war is "religious."

Edward Said refers to an essay by Michael Walzer in the December 8, 1979 issue of the New Republic:

Walzer's title is "The Islam Explosion," and he deals as a self-confessed layman with the vast number of important if (according to him) largely violent and unpleasant twentieth-century events - in the Philippines, in Iran, in Palestine, and elsewhere - which he argues, can be interpreted as instances of the same thing: Islam. What all these events have in common, says Walzer, is first of all
that they show a persistent pattern of power encroaching on the West; second, that they are all generated from a frightening moral fervour (for instance, when Palestinians resist Israeli colonialism it is Walzer's firm assertion that such resistance is religious, not political or civil or human); and third, that these events shatter "the thin colonialist façade of liberalism, secularism, socialism, or democracy." In all three of these common characteristics it is "Islam" that can be discerned, and this "Islam" is a force overriding the distances in time and space that otherwise separate all these events. (1981: 38)

According to Walzer's form of presentation, which is an integral part of dominant Northern discourses on "Islam," people who happen to be Muslims never act according to temporal exigences but are always incited to action by their religion.

On the other hand, while "crusade" is often used in reference to "any energetic movement to remove an evil or improve a situation, [e.g.] a crusade for road safety" (New Lexicon, 1988: 232), the term seems to be usually avoided in current confrontations between the Northern and Muslim societies. Apart from the British general Edmund Allenby, who declared in 1917 upon his triumphant entrance of Jerusalem that the Crusades were finally over, the word is rarely used to describe a contemporary war led by a Northern country against a Muslim one. For example, to have called the 1991 Gulf War "a crusade against naked Iraqi aggression" would have invited suggestions that the American-led United Nations Coalition was motivated by an ancient Northern Christian desire to control the Holy Land's environs. According to dominant international discourses only Southerners are supposed to be motivated by religious imperatives, not members of the rationalist and secularist North.
"Muslim Azerbaijan and Christian Armenia"

Mainstream Northern journalism's jihad model is most likely to be in use when the interests being challenged by a Muslim group are Northern and/or Christian and where the former appears to be acting in the role of the villain and the latter that of the victim. Even when political, historical, ethnic or territorial problems are largely at issue, Northern mass media journalists seem compelled to focus on religious distinctions between combatants. One example of such cultural constructions was the coverage from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s of the Azeri-Armenian conflict in the south-west corner of the former Soviet Union. This war was fought over Nagorno-Karabakh, a territory within Azerbaijan that has a majority of ethnic Armenians. In a study of the coverage by five American newspapers of this conflict from February through August 1988, Levon Chorbajian found that:

The religious strife model was the most commonly used framework for reader understanding. References to Christian Armenians and Moslem Azerbaijanis appeared in 20% of the articles (47 out of 230). Ethnic conflict and nationalism were nearly as common. References to democracy and self determination appeared only rarely ...

Couching events and issues in these terms ... allowed the media to conceal the real conflict nexus which was Armenian-Turkish and not Armenian-Moslem. By doing so the media could conveniently avoid calling attention to NATO ally Turkey. Turkey and Turkic appeared in only 6% of the articles (14 out of 230). In most cases it was simply mentioned in passing that Azerbaijanis were a Turkic or Turkic speaking people. (1990: 6-7)

Canadian coverage of the conflict is analyzed below.
Most articles published in Canadian newspapers about the war between Azeris and Armenians were either from American or other transnational news sources such as Reuter News Agency and generally seemed to be characterized by the tendencies outlined by Chorbajian. A series of write-ups in early 1990 identified Azeris as Shia Muslims, linking them to Iran rather than Turkey\(^5\) (a tendency that was to change later when the coverage turned towards legitimizing Turkish influence in Central Asia). One large and prominent *Ottawa Citizen* headline in its February 17 edition declared "**Muslim-Armenian violence spreads**: Troops quell fighting, curfew imposed in Uzbekistan." Disturbances ranging from demonstrations against Russian hegemony to inter-ethnic conflicts seemed to be caused by religion. Identifying participants as Muslims or Christians appeared to be enough to support speculation about the "religious dimension" of the disturbances in three different Central Asian republics. This tendency was noted in a letter to the editor in *Peace & Security*, a magazine published by the (government-funded but independent) Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security. It said about an article in a previous issue of the magazine by Stephen Handleman, the Moscow bureau chief for *The Toronto Star*:

> Somehow the nationalism of Estonians, Latvians and Armenians against Moscow's over-reaching authority is deemed perfectly reasonable, but that of Uzbeks, Tadzhiks or Kazakhs is portrayed as some dark fundamentalist prospect. Never mind that the churches have played a prominent role in rallying nationalist sentiment from the Baltic to the Caucasus. The slightest hint of Muslim fervour conjures up images of militancy on the march.
For Handleman, even "afternoon prayers in Bukhara contain an ominous message for Moscow itself." (Sajoo, 1989: 19)

Western correspondents based in Moscow seemed generally to adopt Eurocentric biases when reporting events in the Central Asian republics. In covering the religious life of Soviet citizens, they usually focused on the repression of Christians and Jews. Support of the clergy for the movements to end Soviet rule were generally praised by these correspondents, while the participation of Muslims in similar activities in Central Asia were almost always presented as evidence of "Islamic fundamentalism." This did not appear to be a deliberate tendency but was most likely the result of socialization and cultural conditioning that has presented "Islam" and Muslims as the fanatical Other.

Typical of news stories about the conflict is the following first paragraph of an article attributed primarily to The Washington Post news service "with files from Citizen news services," appearing in The Ottawa Citizen on February 29, 1992:

Troops of the former Soviet army were ordered Friday to withdraw from the war-torn enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh in a move that seems likely to lead to an escalation in the fighting between Muslim Azerbaijan and Christian Armenia (bold characters inserted).7

Such references to the religions of the Azeris and Armenians without explaining how they related to the strife between them seem to imply that the war was a religious one involving a theological struggle and perhaps a battle for converts. Readers inundated with reports about the "militant march of Islamic fundamentalism" would have been led to believe that this was yet another
example of that phenomenon, even though there was little evidence to support such an assumption.

The religious strife script appears to operate within the bounds of dramaturgical parameters in which the villainous portrayal of the Muslim is favoured over that of seeing her/him as a victim (or hero). It is worth noting that the jihad journalistic model almost completely disappeared during subsequent coverage of a massacre of Azeris by Armenians, and reappeared distinctly only after the crisis had peaked. This massacre occurred in March in Khojaly, an Azeri village in Nagorno-Karabakh. Figures for the number of deaths ran as low as "dozens" to as high as 1,000. This story upset the neat journalistic scheme in which Christian Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh were completely surrounded and oppressed by Muslim Armenians who occupied the rest of the country. Specific damage control tactics appeared to have been adopted to mitigate the dissonant facts emerging from the coverage of event.

The manners in which the story was reported in morning editions of The Montreal Gazette, The Globe and Mail, The Toronto Star and The Ottawa Citizen between March 2 and 7, 1992 will be tracked here. Several trends can be identified in the coverage of the killings:

• the massacre itself was treated as a secondary issue, usually at the ends of articles;

• prominence was given to Armenian denials, and Azeri "allegations" were characterized as "gross exaggeration";
difficulties were cited in verifying the exact number of deaths due to the inaccessibility of the area, despite the display of bodies on Azerbaijani television;

• the scale of deaths in the Khojaly massacre was downplayed by placing them within the general loss of life in the ongoing conflict;

• when the facts of an Armenian massacre of Azeri villagers became irrefutable, all indications of religious identity completely disappeared as did photographs of the bodies and mourners;

• there was a complete absence of comment on the massacre either in editorials or in opinion columns; and

• even though *The Montreal Gazette* was largely using the same news wire sources as other papers, the reports it printed began returning to systematic references about religion earlier than those in the other newspapers.

It is also interesting to note that later that year, during June when Azerbaijani troops attacked Nagorno-Karabakh, the headline of *The Ottawa Citizen*’s article on the event on June 15 was: "200 Armenians killed in Azerbaijani offensive."

Since Armenians were being slaughtered by Azeris, it seemed appropriate for the write-up based on an AP file from Moscow to state the religions of the two peoples:

Nagorno-Karabakh, a mainly Christian Armenian region in Muslim Azerbaijan, has been the focus of bitter fighting between the former Soviet republics. More than 1,500 have been killed.

This was the fourth in a seven-paragraph article in the *Citizen*’s version and the third in a 12-paragraph front-page AP story in *The Globe* that day.⁹

The story on the Khojaly massacre first broke on March 2 in *The Montreal Gazette*: "CIS moves to pull out troops: Azeri refugees accuse Armenians of killing hundreds" (B1). The main subject of the article by Reuter,
datelined Agdam, Azerbaijan, was the troop pull-out by the Russian-led
Commonwealth of Independent States, with only three of the eight paragraphs
(beginning with the fifth) dealing with claims of a massacre. An accompanying
AFP photograph showed an elderly Azeri man weeping "as a body of a child is
brought into makeshift morgue in Agdam." There was no mention of the
religious affiliation of the Azeris or the Armenians.

On March 3, all four newspapers mentioned "allegations" of a massacre.
The piece which referred to the killings most clearly was a Reuter story and
photo filed from Agdam published in The Toronto Star. There was a sole,
im indirect reference to religion in the caption of the picture: "An Azeri woman cries
out for her dead father yesterday as his body lies in a mosque with those of other
victims"; the religion of Armenians was not identified. The Montreal Gazette
carried a write-up with a Moscow dateline by the Los Angeles Times news
service, squeezed in between reports of troubles in other parts of the former
Soviet Union. It had an AFP picture in which an "Azeri policeman removes the
body of a girl near Khojaly, which Armenian militants attacked last week"; the
surrounding field was strewn with bodies. No religion was mentioned. The Globe
and Mail's article on the event used Associated Press and Reuter stories, also
filed from Moscow. Only three (beginning with the ninth) of the 14 paragraphs
dealt with the killings; no photo was used. There were not any indications of
religious affiliations. The Ottawa Citizen was the only paper to carry a Canadian
wire service's article on the massacre, filed from Moscow by Southam News.
Here too, the focus was on the Russian "troop exit" rather than the killings. "Christian Armenians" were referred to in the context of a political settlement, not that of the deaths of Azeris - whose creed was not identified.

It is interesting to note that all four papers using four different sources (American, British, and Canadian) for the story mentioned the reported numbers of casualties in the middle or end of the respective articles. The Globe's headline was, "CIS sends general to oversee pullout: Azerbaijani official says 50 killed as violence intensifies in enclave," with the figure of 1,000 deaths from Azeri sources not appearing until the tenth paragraph. The Star's headline read, "Azeris mourn victims of alleged massacre"; the lead referred to "dozens of bodies" but again, the figure of "1,000" was not mentioned until the ninth paragraph. Neither The Montreal Gazette nor The Ottawa Citizen's headlines alluded to the massacre, with reference to "1,000" not appearing until the middle of the articles; however, the previous day's piece in the Montreal newspaper's sub-headline did say that "Azeri refugees accuse Armenians of killing hundreds" - which was not mentioned again until the halfway down the story.

On the other hand, when Armenians were victims, figures of deaths tended to be given prominence. A previous article in The Ottawa Citizen which reported on Azeris massacring Armenians had placed the higher estimate in the lead paragraph and lower one in the middle of the article. The first paragraph stated:
Witnesses to the violence in the Azerbaijani city of Sumgait spoke of a "horrifying pogrom" and the killing of "at least" 350 people, a man who visited the city Wednesday said here yesterday.

And halfway down the report:

The [police] officer said that reports of Azerbaijanis storming the houses of Armenians were true and that about 300 people had been injured and 37 were dead.

The religious strife angle was also emphasized here:

Shikov said that the violence in Sumgait was one-sided, with Azerbaijani Moslems killing Armenian Christians. "This was no ethnic conflict," he said. "It was a genuine pogrom."

"Pogrom" was never used in the four journals under study to describe the Armenian killings of Azeris in their March 1992 coverage, although it was used from time to time when Armenians were the victims and Azeris the victimizers. This particular use of the term, which is most frequently used to describe attacks on Jews in the late 19th and early 20th-century Russia, thus linked a Muslim group in a former Soviet republic to a pre-modern form of anti-semitic violence. (Such linkages in dominant Northern discourses are discussed in the next chapter.)

On March 4, 1992, as evidence of large scale killings of Azeris in Khojaly grew, the four Canadian newspapers prominently carried denials by the Armenian officials. There were no photographs in any of the publications. The Montreal Gazette had an article from the Los Angeles Times News Service datelined Moscow and an editorial on the Azeri-Armenian conflict, although the latter dwelt only with the CIS pull-out. (During the entire week of the
coverage of the massacre this was the only editorial on the Azeri-Armenian conflict in the four journals. The Globe and Mail printed a write-up with joint AP and Reuter credits, filed from Agdam.\textsuperscript{17} The Toronto Star used an AP article, also with an Agdam dateline\textsuperscript{18}, and The Ottawa Citizen had an AP story from Moscow.\textsuperscript{19} There was not a single mention of religion in any of the four papers, but the latter two carried the following paragraph:

Nagorno-Karabakh's population of about 200,000 is mainly Armenian. But it is surrounded by Azerbaijan, which has administered the territory since 1929.

Thus, at the height of the ongoing discovery of the massacre, all references to the religious affiliations of the victims or the villains had disappeared as had pictures of the bodies or people mourning. On the other hand, reporting of the denials of the large scale of Azeri deaths had increased.

On March 5, the Citizen did not report on the Azeri-Armenian conflict. The Star's story from the Los Angeles Times News Service, datelined Moscow, described how "Azeri TV shows piles of bodies." But again there was no accompanying picture and no mention of religion. The Gazette carried an AP article and photo of an Azeri woman weeping at a gravesite, and did have three references to religious affiliations:

Wails of mourning mixed with gunfire yesterday as fighting edged closer to this city bordering the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijaniis buried more dead from last week's Armenian attack. Azerbaijan's government called on the United Nations to send peacekeeping troops to patrol the mostly Muslim country's border with Christian Armenia and prevent further bloodshed in Nagorno-Karabakh.
The government condemned the assault on the town of Khojaly as deliberate genocide and accused former Soviet troops of complicity. A spokesman for the troops, now under the command of the Commonwealth of Independent States, flatly denied any involvement. Presidents Boris Yeltsin of Russia and Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan made urgent new appeals for a ceasefire in the bloodiest ethnic conflict in the former Soviet Union. Nazarbayev, a Muslim, said he was "especially stunned" by the storming of Khojaly [bold characters inserted].

The Globe carried the same AP picture as the Gazette on the front page, and had a write-up from AP and Reuter on an inside page. The initial paragraphs were largely similar to those in the Montreal paper; however, unlike the article in the Gazette, religious affiliations were completely absent. Compare this paragraph in the Globe's article with the one quoted above from the Gazette:

Wails of mourning mixed with gunfire yesterday as Azerbaijanis buried their dead and fighting edged closer to this city bordering on the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijan's government condemned last week's Armenian assault on the town of Khojaly as "deliberate genocide" and charged complicity by troops of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Commonwealth armed forces denied involvement. Presidents Boris Yeltsin of Russia and Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan made urgent appeals for a ceasefire in the bloodiest ethnic conflict in the former Soviet Union. Nazarbayev said he was "especially stunned" by the storming of Khojaly.21

Not having access to the original articles by AP and Reuter, I cannot assume either that the Globe's editor systematically edited out all references to religion or that the Gazette's inserted them. Nevertheless, it is clear that indications of religious affiliation were still being avoided by the dominant discourses in describing a situation in which Muslims were victims of Christians.
On the following day the *Globe*'s article on the Azeri-Armenian war did make references to religion, albeit in the second-last paragraph:

Mr. Mutalibov accused Russia of being behind the recent upsurge of fighting and success by Christian Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh, which is predominantly Armenian but lies within Muslim Azerbaijan.

In the "inverted pyramid" arrangement of the write-up, based on AP and Reuter stories from Baku (the capital of Azerbaijan), the most important facts seemed to be that two former Soviet republics, Azerbaijan and Moldova, were accusing Russia of escalating ethnic strife within their respective borders. Casualty figures of the latest fighting and quotations from various leaders were given, and it was only at the 11th paragraph that references to the Khojaly massacre began, with religious affiliations indicated in the 15th. The *Gazette* had a shorter version of the AP/Reuter story and an AP photo of family members weeping at the "coffin of Nagorno-Karabakh fighting" (not used by the *Globe*). The Montreal paper had only 11 paragraphs, which did not include the one referring to religion since the bottom of the inverted triangle was omitted. Neither the *Star* nor the *Citizen* carried articles on the conflict in their March 6 editions.

On the next day, the four journals had articles about the resignation of the president of Azerbaijan. The *Gazette*'s report was by the Canadian Press (CP) with a Moscow dateline. The tenth paragraph said:

Nagorno-Karabakh is a predominantly Christian Armenian enclave inside mostly Muslim Azerbaijan where more than 1,000 people have been killed in four years of ethnic violence. It's the longest-running and most violent of the many ethnic disputes in the former Soviet Union.
The article then went on to give brief accounts of recent casualties and of "Azerbaijani claims" of an Armenian "massacre" without giving any numbers.

The write-up in the Citizen was credited primarily to Southam News with "files from CP and Washington Post." It is clear that the file from CP was the same as the one used that day by the Gazette, since two paragraphs in both the articles were identical. However, the references made to religion in the Gazette were not included in the Ottawa publication, which did mention the massacre of Azeris by Armenians. Therefore, it is safe to assume that there was a conscious editorial decision either by the Gazette to insert religious affiliations or by the Citizen to remove them.

Interestingly, that day's issue of the Citizen had another article on the Azeri-Armenian conflict from CP, which referred to religious loyalties but not to the Khojaly massacre. This was a story on Canadian medical aid, also filed from Moscow; it was placed next to the one on the resignation of the Azerbaijani president. The sixth paragraph read:

Nagorno-Karabakh is a predominantly Christian Armenian enclave inside mostly Muslim Azerbaijan where more than 1,000 people have been killed in four years of ethnic violence. But a new level of fighting flared recently in the isolated mountainous region.

No direct allusions were made to recent reports of the Khojaly massacre even though a spokesman for the International Committee of the Red Cross was quoted saying "We don't know how many victims there actually are but this is an important first step to cope with a real human tragedy" and that "the Red Cross
used part of the money to purchase 1,000 'body bags' to remove the bodies of recent fighting." Although the article mentioned "1,000" as being all the deaths during the previous four years, this was the same number of deaths attributed by Azeri sources to the Khojaly massacre. While the urgent shipment of Canadian medical aid apparently seemed to have been prompted by the recent massacre, The Ottawa Citizen's write-up did not clearly mention the event. It appears that the paper was having trouble placing reports that identified Armenians as Christians and Azeris as Muslims in stories where the former appeared to be the villains and the latter the victims.

The same seemed to be the case in that day's Globe and Mail, which also had two articles on the same page about the Azeri-Armenian situation. A Reuter piece from Baku reported on the stepping-down of the Azerbaijani president, stating that

The public outcry that led to Mr. Mutalibov's resignation was sparked by serious Azeri losses during Armenia's capture of the town of Khojaly last week. More than 100 bodies, many mutilated, were found in surrounding hills and Azeri officials said at least 1,000 people had been killed.

No mention was made of religious affiliations which, however, did appear in the adjoining feature article datelined Yerevan (Armenia's capital) written by the newspaper's Moscow bureau chief. As in the case with the Citizen, there was no reference made to the massacre of the previous week in the latter article that did describe Armenians as Christians and Azeris as Muslims. The Star's piece on the
Azerbaijani president's resignation, filed from Moscow by the Washington Post news service related that

Azerbaijani militiamen have sworn to avenge an alleged massacre by Armenian forces last week in Khojaly, an Azerbaijani town in Karabakh.

There were two Reuter photos related to the president's downfall but, again, no mention was made of the religions of the Azeris or Armenians. However, immediately below this story was the continuation of a front-page feature story by the paper's Moscow bureau chief, Stephen Handleman, on the growth of "Islam's political appeal" in other former Soviet republics of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

Therefore, from March 2 to March 7 the four newspapers' coverage of the massacre in Khojaly had consistently tended to downplay the event's significance. The claims of Azeris were described as "exaggerations" and the lower numbers of deaths were given prominence over the higher ones, even though in previous cases when Armenians had been killed the trend was reversed. There was no editorial comment condemning or even lamenting the loss of life in any of the four papers. However, what was most remarkable was the almost complete disappearance of references to religion at the peak of massacre's coverage. The newspapers seemed extremely reluctant to refer to the facts that the killers in this case happened to be Christians and their victims Muslims; whereas religious affiliations are gratuitously stated in the general
reporting of the conflict, the Khojaly massacre did not seem to fit the dominant model in which the Muslim Other appears as threatening Christendom.

In subsequent coverage of the Azeri-Armenian war the Khojaly massacre had become insignificant and the reportage went back to routinely referring to people according to their religious affiliations. For example, the tenth paragraph of a 19-paragraph write-up in the March 11 issue of the *Globe*, credited to AP and Reuter, datelined Brussels and written within the context of the discussions of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe\(^3\), stated:

The mostly **Christian Armenian** enclave, with about 200,000 people, has been controlled by predominantly **Muslim** **Azerbaijan** since 1929 [bold characters inserted].

Compare this with the following which had appeared on March 4, at the height of the reportage of the massacre, when both *The Toronto Star*\(^{31}\) and *The Ottawa Citizen*\(^{32}\) had used AP stories with a very similar passage:

Nagorno-Karabakh's population of about 200,000 is mainly Armenian. But it is surrounded by Azerbaijan, which has administered the territory since 1929.

At that time it had apparently seemed inappropriate to refer to religious affiliations.

Although the March 11 *Globe* story was accompanied by a picture of Azeri mourners at Agdam, it made no mention of the Khojaly massacre but referred instead to the "ancient accusations" of Armenia and Azerbaijan against each other. In this way ideological closure was effected over the event (which had resulted in the highest death toll of any single encounter in the war) by
relegating it to the catalogue of "ancient accusations." A March 14 feature article in *The Star* by a staff writer seemed to be working in the same manner, juxtaposing the Armenian "massacre" against "Azeri pogroms." He went on to broaden the *jihad* model to place the Azeri-Annenian struggle within "ancient rivalry" of "Islamic powers" such as Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Egypt:

But the South Caucasus situation is only part of a much wider conflict. Today, a struggle is going on for the leadership of the Islamic world. It is the same struggle that had been waged for centuries before the Western empires, with their overwhelming military technology, forced much of the Islamic world into a straitjacket. It is not a question of Sunni Muslims versus Shias, although that is part of it. Throughout history there have been East-West struggles in the region - between Greece and Persia, between Rome and Persia, between the Arabs and the Persians, between the Ottomans and the Persians.

**ISLAMIC WORLD**
The increasing modernization of the Islamic world - and the fall of Communist Russia - has revived that struggle.33

Through some remarkable contortions of logic the writer attempted to show that the very modernization of the Muslim people was making them revert increasingly to their ancient ways. The implication is that if the Northern empires do not again force the Muslim world into a neocolonial "straitjacket" the region will become a hotbed of "Islamic" militancy.

It is ironic that even when Muslims are massacred in large numbers by non-Muslims, the blame can be directed towards "Islam." According to Jacques Ellul, the integration propagandist can count on the inexhaustible capacity of "current-events man" to forget the details of daily reporting:
... such a man is highly sensitive to the influence of present-day currents; lacking landmarks, he follows all currents. He is unstable because he runs after what happened today; he relates to the event, and therefore cannot resist any impulse coming from that event. Because he is immersed in current affairs, this man has a psychological weakness that puts him at the mercy of the propagandist. No confrontation ever occurs between the event and the truth; no relationship ever exists between the event and the person. Real information never concerns such a person. (1969: 47)

Although such a complete divorce from "the truth" probably does not occur all the time, the continual output of the mass media overwhelms the person absorbed primarily with immediate happenings. A newspaper reader cannot be expected to refer to the details of previous reports to notice inconsistencies and contradictions; s/he merely retains an overall impression that conforms to the basic myths and cognitive models concerning the particular issue. In the present case, the myth of the Nation and the primary image of "the violent Muslim" remains culturally dominant. The lasting impression is that of "Islam" destabilizing the global system of nation-states.

The Muslim as Victim

The AP article in the June 15, 1992 issues of The Ottawa Citizen and The Globe and Mail, which covered the conflict between "Christian Armenians" and "Muslim Azeris," also indicated that "ethnic fighting was reported in South Ossetia, a separatist region of Georgia [bold characters inserted]." Whereas mass media coverage generally cited the religious affiliations of Azeris and Armenians, those of the warring parties in South Ossetia, who also happened to
be Christian and Muslim, rarely were. Since the conflicts in which Muslims were
normatively constructed as victims were not characterized as religious, even the
occasional backgrounder like that on the various "ethnic tensions" in the
disintegrating Soviet Union in the December 26, 1991 issue of The Ottawa
Citizen, while citing the differing religious affiliations, expressly stated that the
problem was "territorial." This write-up distinguished between the respective
struggles of various peoples in Georgia and Nagorno-Karabakh who happened to
be Christian and Muslim:

Nagorno-Karabakh, a kind of Soviet version of Northern Ireland, is controlled by Shiite Muslims from Azerbaijan but populated mainly by Christian Armenians. It has witnessed hundreds of deaths as the Azeris asserted their control over the local Armenians.

An almost identical situation exists in the northern part of Georgia, where wealthier and better educated Georgians control an area known as southern Ossetia, which is populated by poorer Persian-descended people.

While there are religious elements involved - the Georgians are Christian, the Ossetians Muslim - the real distinction is over land and the desire of the Ossetians to be part of Russian, not Georgia. Territorial disputes are also at the root of ethnic clashes between Muslim Abkhazians and Christian Georgians around the Black Sea coastal city Sukhumi. The area is the traditional homeland for Abkhazians, who reject the Georgians' domination.

According to this narrative, whereas the Armenians were the victims in
Azerbaijan, the Ossetians and Abkhazians had this role in Georgia: Armenians in
Nagorno-Karabakh were "controlled by Shiite Muslims from Azerbaijan" and there had been "hundreds of deaths as the Azeris asserted their control over the local Armenians" while the "wealthier and better-educated and Georgians control an area known as southern Ossetia, which is populated by poorer Persian-
descended people" and the Abkhazians "reject the Georgians' domination" over their "traditional homeland."

This conforms to what Robert L. Ivie has identified as one of the classic ways of portraying victimage.

The usual strategy is to construct the image indirectly through contrasting references to the adversary's coercive, irrational, and aggressive attempts to subjugate a freedom-loving, rational, and pacific victim. (1980: 284)

"Control" and "domination" were ascribed to the Azeris and Georgians, whereas the victims (the Armenians, the "poorer" Ossetians and the Abkhazians) strove to assert their own sovereignty over areas where they were in majority and that were their "traditional homelands." It is also interesting to note the manners in which relationships with the "Islamic" bogeyman Iran are constructed: while the Azeris were identified as Shi'ite Muslims (the majority branch of Muslims in Iran) the Ossetians were described as "Persian-descended people."35

Thus, where the Christian was the victim the conflict was constructed as being primarily religious and where the victim was Muslim it was seen as being "territorial," even though territory was clearly the major problem in both wars. No explanation was given for depicting the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh as religious except for implications arising from it being "a kind of Soviet version of Northern Ireland" and the Azeris being Shi'ite Muslims. Since the conflict in Northern Ireland has been between people who happened to be of Catholic and Protestant backgrounds it is generally seen as being religious, notwithstanding the absence of theological argumentation and propaganda that would be expected
to be an overt feature of a religious war. And as "Shi'ite Iran" is generally viewed as wanting to export its revolution, the Shi'ite Azeris must also be working for the domination of "Islam" over Nagorno-Karabakh. One of the two file photos used by the Citizen to illustrate the June 15, 1992 article shows an Azeri with a raised, clenched fist carrying a flag with a crescent and a star, considered to be an "Islamic" symbol (but which, incidentally, also appears on the flag of secularist Turkey); the other portrays armed Armenian fighters climbing a hill. The villainous characterization of the Georgian government was at its height in depicting the struggle between the supporters of the former president Zviad Gamsakhurdia, who was toppled from power in January 1992, and those Georgians who resented his authoritarian rule. During that time, the Ossetians, who were being suppressed by Gamsakhurdia's government, emerged as victims in the coverage of this conflict by transnational news agencies' correspondents based in Moscow.

Georgia's image had also suffered in the reporting of its relations with Moscow, from which it was one of the earliest to secede. As specific "nationalities" within the Soviet Union began to agitate for autonomy or independence from Moscow in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Gorbachev and Yeltsin governments were generally portrayed as holding on course progressive programs of reform in the face of conservative communist reaction. There seemed to be apprehension among Western "experts" and Moscow-based journalists that
Such conflicts would provide conservatives with their most convincing argument - that democratization within the Soviet empire is impossible, and in fact suicidal.\textsuperscript{36}

Since the conflict between the Georgians and the Ossetians "a tiny ethnic minority that has traditionally been loyal to Moscow\textsuperscript{37}" was placed within the larger one between the Georgian and the Soviet governments, journalists did not seem to feel the need to couch the issue in religious terms. However, in reporting an uprising in the mostly Muslim Chechnya, a small southern republic in the Russian federation bordering Georgia, the religious strife script was used by the Northern mass media. One newsreader on the Newsworld channel of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation stated that it was "the rebellious religion of Islam\textsuperscript{38}" that was opposing Moscow. It is also worth noting that the dominant coverage of the conflict between Chechnya and the Moscow government stressed the "Islamic" zeal of Chechens in December 1994, when the latter were preparing for war.\textsuperscript{39} However, upon the brutal crushing of the republic by Russian troops - and the clear emergence of Chechens as victims - references to religion almost completely vanished. Therefore, in such journalistic constructions, creed is seen as being irrelevant when a group that happens to be Muslim and wants to remain with Russia; but religion is highlighted when a Muslim territory opposes Russian hegemony.

Even though the Azeri-Armenian conflict was often covered on the same pages of newspapers as the one in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the religious conflict script was generally avoided in the latter case. The "Serbs" appeared as the
villains in their conflict with "Croatians" during 1991 and early 1992. When the focus moved to Bosnia-Herzegovina, the "Serbs," having been cast in the role of the victimizers, remained the villains with Bosnia's "Muslims" and "Croats" becoming the new victims. Since 1968, Slavs of Muslim cultural backgrounds in the former Yugoslav region have been permitted to register officially as belonging to a "Muslim nationality" even though most of them are not strict practitioners Muslims (Lewis, 1988: 117). Muslims in the former Yugoslavia are distinguished from "Serbs," "Croats" and other "nationalities" even though they share common ethnic origins with these groups. Therefore, contrary to the dominant religious strife script, "the truest victims" of the Bosnian conflict were identified as "Muslims" because that was their official designation as a "nationality" in the former Yugoslavia. But this was generally not explained in newspaper accounts covering the war, and the readership most likely saw this only as a religious identity rather than a religio-cultural one.

However, it seems remarkable that even though members of a religious group were named as primary victims, the dominant coverage of this conflict resisted framing it as a religious war. While there occasionally was coverage of Muslim burial ceremonies and of "Croats" and "Serbs" going to churches during ceasefires, the war was not described as "Muslim-Christian." The religious affiliations of the "Serbs" were either not identified within the context of the brutal conflict or their "Eastern Orthodox beliefs" were emphasized, harking back to the distinctions between the Western and the Eastern Churches. A New
York Times Magazine article on July 26, 1992 titled "The Dying City of Sarajevo," which was one of the rare examples in which the creeds of all of the combatants in Bosnia-Herzegovina were identified, stated:

If the attackers have singled out anything, it has been symbols of Muslim culture. More than 50 percent of the residents of Sarajevo, and 44 percent of all Bosnians, are Muslims. Reared on legends about Serbian armies that battled and lost to the Ottoman Turks, Serbian nationalists have made war in the name of a myth - that Serbian survival, and that of their Eastern Orthodox beliefs, is at mortal risk from Muslim fundamentalism, and that Bosnia will not be safe until the two-thirds of the territory they control has been "ethnically cleansed."

The caption of a photograph seemed to re-emphasize the sectarian nature of the fighting:

Above: What is left of the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Stup, a Croatian village near the airport, after it was hit by a Serbian artillery shell last month. Most Croats are Catholics; the attacking Serbs are of the Eastern Orthodox faith.

"Christian" did not appear once in the write-up: this was a conflict in which "Eastern Orthodox Serbs" were the victimizers and the "Catholic Croats" and "Muslims" were the victims. Even in reports which indicated that both "Serb" and "Croat nationalists" were working together to take advantage of the Muslims' vulnerability to enlarge their respective territories, the conflict was not portrayed as a "Christian-Muslim" one.42

Occasional television interviews of Bosnian "Muslims" included references to "Serb" snipers as "terrorists"; however, this term was not used by journalists themselves. Nor did articles which reported that the "Serbs" were motivated in their attacks on "Muslims" by fears of perceived threats to the
Eastern Orthodox Church in Bosnia-Herzegovina refer to the "Serbs" as "Christian terrorists" or "Christian fundamentalists." In a letter to The Globe and Mail, Wilfred Cantwell Smith, a noted Orientalist, wrote:

The headline of your article Muslim Forces Threaten Canadians (June 21) is a flagrant illustration of a general anti-Islamic bias shared by most Westerners and fuelled by most Western media, especially in North America.

... On the same page as the above article about threats, you speak in a longer article of "the beleaguered Bosnian government," Western "support of the Bosnian government," "the Bosnian government's dream of a pluralistic democracy," and so on, and never once mention that they are Muslim - for in that article they appear in a sympathetic light. Once there is a matter of their making an anti-UN move, however, this other article speaks of "the Muslim-led Bosnian government," and the headline refers only to their being Muslim.

I have not failed to notice that your reporting on the former Yugoslavia has throughout spoken of "the Serbs" and "the Croats." We never read, this past while, that the "Christians" took all those UN hostages, including Canadians, although the Serbs are just as much Orthodox ..., and the Croats just as much Roman Catholic, as the Bosnian government and its supporters are Muslim. (5/7/95: A12)43

And although the Bosnian Serbs were fighting against the internationally-recognized government of Bosnia-Herzegovina, they were rarely described as "rebels."

The reluctance of Northern journalists in casting the Bosnian conflict as a religious one contrasted markedly with the manners in which other wars between peoples of Christian and Muslim background have been characterized as such, especially when Christians are victims and Muslims their victimizers. Usually, statements by "Muslim fundamentalists" are taken at face value when they
indicate that the reasons for their actions are "Islamic." But declarations by some "Serbs" that they were fighting for Christendom were largely treated with scepticism.44 A Reuter article in The Toronto Star stated:

Bosnia's Serbs, condemned internationally as the aggressors in a savage war, want to be seen as Christian crusaders saving Europe from Islam.

... "Why is Christian Europe against us? We are defending them," said Velibor Ostojic, information minister of the self-proclaimed Bosnian Serb government. "Islam is growing everywhere. Christian Lebanon and Cyprus have been taken over. The Armenians are being wiped out. The Muslims have finance, an ideology and most of all increasing manpower."

Ostojic contends there is a plan to create a "Muslim corridor" linking Bosnia's Muslims with Muslim Albanians, Bulgaria's Turkish minority and Turkey itself...

Crucifix-wearing Serbian soldiers claim to take their inspiration from their orthodox faith, and across northern Bosnia, Serbian children wave at passing cars with a three-fingered salute said to signify the Holy Trinity.

"This is religious war," said orthodox Bishop Vasil from the northeast Bosnian city of Tuzla. "The West does not understand." But skeptics say Orthodox churches in the area are poorly attended, and that the faith is being used as a cloak for purely political ends. "This is a war for land and money. Religion is an excuse," said a Catholic priest, one of the scared Croatian minority still living in Banja Luka.

Muslim charity workers in the city agreed, saying relations with the orthodox Church were good before the war began.45 One rarely finds similar attempts to discuss how "Islam" may be used "as a cloak for purely political ends." The "religious" motives of "Muslim fundamentalists" seem beyond doubt because in dominant Northern discourses that is how Muslims are supposed to act; true Christians, on the other hand, are not expected to engage in savage warfare.
One particular method by which the religious strife script was avoided was by levelling out the victimizer-victim relationship, making everyone equally responsible for atrocities. The occasional article even seemed to turn around the image of the (Christian) "Serb" as villain and the "Muslim" as the victim as a result of this levelling out. A Reuter article printed in The Ottawa Citizen's "Religion" page on July 25, 1992 was headlined "Priest's place is where the fighting is." It quoted "Rev. Dragomir Ubiparipovic [who] is the last Serbian Orthodox priest in the centre of Sarajevo" and "is one of the real heroes to emerge from the war in Bosnia":

"In the past, there was no problem - Serbs, Muslims and Croats have lived here for hundreds of years, and will again in the future - but now the media campaign against the Serbs is so strong that it is not easy to be a Serb in Sarajevo today" ...

The nearest Ubiparipovic comes to a political judgment is to say that all three groups who live in Bosnia - Serb, Muslim and Croat - bear responsibility for the slaughter. "The devil himself is ashamed of the things which are going on here today."

This article thus contrasts "all three [villainous] groups" with the heroic priest who shepherds his flock "to safety before he escapes himself." The "Serbs" and "Croat" fighters (whose religious identities are not indicated here) cannot be real Christians since the "devil himself is ashamed" as a result of their actions. However, the third of the three villainous groups, the "Muslims," are apparently identified by adherence to "Islam," which is after all is supposed to be "the religion of the sword."
The most victimized people, according to the piece, are Eastern Orthodox Christians who have "a bigger cross to bear because they are Serbs": only the "more sophisticated residents (of Sarajevo) draw a distinction between the Chetniks - the Serb fighters attacking them - and their Serb neighbours in the town."

Therefore, the primary dramaturgical dynamic that this article constructed was between the sole, heroic Christian priest, his victimized flock, and the cruel fighters who included "Muslims" and others of ambiguous religious allegiances. While this form of discursive engineering was not usual in the dominant
Illustration 7

The jihad model.
Peace envoy must stop Muslims from over-running Serb towns

Sarajevo's spirit of Christmas

Muslims take UN rescuers hostage

Serbs prepare to leave Sarajevo in fear of Muslim retribution

Dozens slaughtered by Moslem fanatics in Nigerian rampage

Muslims now the good guys in Croatian propaganda war

Rebel republic mobilizes for 'holy war' on Russia
construction of the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina, it is an example of how an individual journalist writing about religion can attempt to turn around an awkward situation in which the Christian seems to be the victimizer and Muslim the victim. Among the reasons that Adrian Hastings, a British professor of theology, gave for Western reluctance to criticize Serbs was that

Anglicans in particular are anxious to remain on good terms with the Orthodox. The Serbian Orthodox Church has done a great deal to fuel Serb nationalism. To take a strong line against Serb aggression could be to displease one's Orthodox friends. Better to stress instead that this is a complex matter and there must be wrongs on every side.46

While the dominant discourses rarely dwelt on such ecumenical considerations within Christendom, they were not reluctant in pointing out the support that countries like Iran gave to Bosnian Muslims.

Another case in which the religious strife script is routinely applied is the coverage of the conflict between northern and southern Sudan. The majority of northern Sudanese are Arab Muslims and most southern Sudanese are black Africans adhering either to Christian or "animist" beliefs. One of the primary journalistic themes in this context was the attempt of the Khartoum government to impose Muslim law on the entire country, and therefore it seems to have been appropriate for religious differences to be indicated in news reports. Most articles on the conflict between northern and southern Sudan had a standard sentence such as:

The south, a Christian and animist region, has long been dissatisfied with rule by the more prosperous Moslem north.47
However, religious identities inexplicably disappeared in an AP story published in *The Ottawa Citizen* on July 9, 1987 in which members of the Sudanese Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA) kidnapped four American and British aid workers of Christian relief organizations from their homes in southern Sudan.

The last paragraph alluded to a possible reason for the incident.

> The Sudanese official said rebels recently told relief agencies operating in southern Sudan to stop any activities except in coordination with the rebels.

But no mention was made of the religious affiliations of the SPLA members or even of the fact that the organization's leader, John Garang, was Christian. Again, it seems that religious strife script had become awkward in the case where the Christian rebels were targeting Western Christian aid workers. Religious identities only seemed to be relevant when Muslims attacked Christians. While it does not seem that journalists consciously construct such scenarios, their regular recurrence does suggest that they subscribe to a field of meanings in which Muslims are usually villains who attack Christians for religious reasons.

> Journalists appear to find the religious strife model a convenient way to explain conflicts whose historical and sociological roots they do not understand. It seems that once a war has been defined as that between Christians and Muslims this is accepted as a given in dominant media discourses. However, there does also tends to be operating a cultural dynamic that emphasizes the role of the Muslim as the villain. Northern propagandists appear to be comfortable with this construction since they share in a historical memory that holds "Islam"
to be a primary Other. On the other hand, even though the Northern mass media are supposed without religious affiliations, they are reluctant to identify Christians as villains, especially when Muslims have been victimized by them. Sadly, the use of the religious strife script will most likely continue as the perception of a Christian North in conflict with "the Muslim world" grows.

Notes

1. Whereas Chorbajian (1990: 6) views conceptions about religious strife in general as a model, it would be, according to Teun van Dijk's scheme of discursive macrostructures, a script. Van Dijk says that scripts "contain all we know in our culture about a specific stereotypical type of episode" (1988: 13) - in the present case, "religious war." On the other hand, a model draws from a series of events about particular actors to "function as the referential basis of cognitive interpretation" (ibid: 22) involving those particular actors. The stereotypical perception of conflicts between followers of particular religions, such as Islam and Christianity, is presented in this dissertation as a model. The cognitive macrostructure which views all conflicts involving Muslims as inspired by "Islam" is termed here as the jihad model.

2. One of the few exceptions have been the dominant narratives on the "troubles" in Northern Ireland, primarily framed as religious in nature while underplaying their historical and economic roots.

3. For example, dominant media discourses had divided Beirut during the Lebanese civil war into "Christian East Beirut" and "Muslim West Beirut." G.H. Jansen, discussing an incident in which the forces of a (Catholic) Maronite general were shelling parts of the city, indicates how the overlapping of religious communities within the various factions and geographical areas was distorted by the simplistic dichotomy: "The target for Aoun's gunners, many of whom are themselves Muslims, has been what is usually called 'predominantly West Beirut', but at present there are almost as many Christians as Muslims in West Beirut" (1989: 57).

4. For a discussion of the historical context of the conflict, see Dragadze (1989).


8. This word is used here as a value-free term denoting the simultaneous killing of a large number of people.


33. Gerald Utting, "Ethnic horrors fuel new 'Great Game',' The Toronto Star (14/3/92: D5).


35. Following the establishment of the theocratic government in Tehran, this has become a common discursive tactic for avoiding allusions to Iran which was historically referred to as Persia. However, it is noteworthy that during the reign of pro-Western Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlevi, who was overthrown in 1979, the use of "Iranian" had predominated - as in this description of the Ossetians in a book on the peoples and customs of West Asia: "The Ossetians are an Islamic people who speak a language that is related to Iranian (Persian)" (Wouters, 1979: 43).


38. Lorne Saxberg, 13:00 news bulletin, Newsworld (Nov. 9, 1991).


40. Some newspapers did carry the complaints of Serbian Canadians about Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina being unfairly portrayed as villains. Cf. Slobodan Rascanin, Letters to the Editor, "Media, politicians unfair in casting Serbs as villains," The Calgary Herald (18/7/92: A6); Slobodan Rascanin and Slavko Grujicic, Serbian Unity Congress in Calgary, Letters to the Editor, "Media, politicians unfair in casting Serbs as villains", The Calgary Herald (18/7/92: A6).

41. Editorials, "UN - The Iranian View," The Ottawa Citizen (31/7/92: A8).

42. For example, this headline in the Citizen: "Croats, Serbs plot to isolate Muslims" (15/5/93: A9).

43. That this letter by a prominent Orientalist criticizing dominant discourses was published by The Globe and Mail (although his being Professor Emeritus in the comparative history of religion at Harvard University may have had a lot to do with this) with the headline "Anti-Islamic bias shows,"
confirms that alternative discourses are not absent from "Canada's National Newspaper" nor from Orientalism.


45. Reuter, "Serbs see selves as 'crusaders'," The Toronto Star (14/8/92: A14). Among the beliefs that some Serbs held about Bosnian Muslims were that they "crucified Christian children, decapitated them and sent the corpses floating down the Drina river" (30/6/92: A11). For a discussion of the role of the Serbian media in acting as propagandists for the Serbian cause in Bosnia-Herzegovina, see Thompson (1994).

46. Adrian Hastings, The Guardian, "Church has failed Bosnia," The Ottawa Citizen (10/7/93: C5).

Chapter 10
Reporting from the Holy Land
Cross-bearing "Muslim Terrorists"

Some of the manners in which the religious strife script is used to construct relationships between Muslims, Christians and Jews in the Holy Land are explored here. The perceived values of Muslims are continually contrasted in dominant Northern discourses with those of Christians and Jews, with the latter two usually emerging as morally superior. The attitudes and behaviour of Muslims is generally seen as being determined by a regressive and barbaric religion. On the other hand, even the values of the Enlightenment - despite its secularist tendencies - are often credited to "our Judeo-Christian tradition" (Lewis, 1990: 60). Secular Northern society's rationality and modernity is usually contrasted with the supposedly superstitious "Islamic" outlook:

... the assumption is that whereas "the West" is greater than and has surpassed the stage of Christianity, its principal religion, the world of Islam - its varied societies, histories, and languages notwithstanding - is still mired in religion, primitivity, and backwardness. Therefore, the West is modern, greater than the sum of its parts, full of enriching contradictions and yet always "Western" in its cultural identity; the world of Islam, on the other hand, is no more than "Islam," reducible to a small number of unchanging characteristics despite the appearance of contradictions and experiences of variety that seem on the surface to be as plentiful as those of the West. (Said, 1981: 10)

Thus, most human phenomena that occur in Muslim societies can be explained away as resulting from the adherence of their inhabitants to "Islam." The religion is often cited as the cause for wars, economic crises and social upheavals.

Dominant Northern constructions of Israel share in the general image of "the West" as secular, modern and rational as opposed to that of Muslims as
fanatical, technologically primitive and irrational (Said, 1981: 9-10). Whereas
zealotry (religious or political) is often portrayed as limited to the fringes of
Western civilization, it is usually presented as a fundamental and unchanging
feature of Muslim societies. In this, Israel stands as the primary outpost of
civilization in the Muslim jungle, and as such becomes a lens through which the
contemporary Western experience with "Islam" is viewed. Edward Said elaborates
on the role of Israel in mediating Northern and particularly American views of the
Middle East since World War II:

In the first place, Israel's avowedly religious character is rarely
mentioned in the Western press: only recently have there been
overt references to Israeli religious fanaticism, and all of these have
been to the zealots of Gush Emunim, whose principal activity has
been the violent setting up of illegal settlements on the West Bank.
Yet most accounts of Gush Emunim in the West simply leave out
the inconvenient fact that it was "secular" Labour governments that
first instituted illegal settlements in occupied Arab territory, not
just religious fanatics now stirring things up. This kind of one-
sided reporting is, I think, an indication of how Israel - the Middle
East's "only democracy" and "our staunch ally" - has been used as a
foil for Islam. Thus Israel has appeared as a bastion of Western
civilization hewn (with much approbation and self-congratulation)
out of the Islamic wilderness. Secondly, Israel's security in
American eyes has become conveniently interchangeable with
fending off Islam, perpetuating Western hegemony, and
demonstrating the virtues of modernization. In these ways, three
sets of illusions economically buttress and reproduce one another
in the interests of shoring up the Western self-image and promoting
Western power over the Orient: the view of Islam, the ideology of
modernization, and the affirmations of Israel's value to the West.
(Ibid: 31)

Even following the peace agreement between the government of Israel and the
Palestinian Liberation Organization these tendencies remain latent in dominant
discourses; indeed with the growth of the Islamist movement among Palestinians the essentialist distinctions between the West and "Islam" have been enhanced.

The image of the Muslim as innately violent is so deeply entrenched in Northern discourses that little ideological labour is required in reproducing it. It is frequently assumed by the mass media that an "Arab-looking" guerilla with a gun can be none other than a "Muslim terrorist." That the person could possibly be of a Christian background often appears to be dismissed, even though Christian Arabs are known to have engaged in terrorism. There seems to be a fixed idea in the minds of many Northern journalists about the visual appearance of a "Muslim terrorist." For example, in an article titled "The Suicide Terrorists" Maclean's captioned a picture of a dishevelled teenager wearing battle fatigues and holding an automatic rifle, "Islamic amal gunman in Beirut: 'human Exocet missiles' can attack anywhere" (26/12/83: 21). The image seemed to fit the dominant visual model of an "Islamic terrorist" so well that the editors appear to have overlooked that two crucifixes were hanging from the teenager's neck. In the apparent haste to illustrate the article with a file photo of an "Islamic terrorist" the editorial staff seems to have disregarded the all-important detail. Such an occurrence, however, is revealing of media practices that are influenced by dominant perceptions of what Muslim guerillas look like. Even though this gaffe could be excused as "an honest mistake" in the rush to meet a deadline, it was undoubtedly made possible by the cultural stereotypes that exist in Northern societies about Muslims.
While such an error cannot often be spotted by readers, this particular mistake demonstrates the extent to which media consumers are dependent on the mass media to deliver the "facts" of events that they cannot personally verify.

No one lives in direct contact either with truth or reality. Each one of us lives in a world actually made by human beings, in which such things as "the nation" or "Christianity" or "Islam" are the result of agreed-upon convention, of historical processes, and above all, of willed human labor expended to give those things an identity we can recognize. (Said, 1981: 41-42)

Each society’s cognitive scripts provide its members with sets of stereotypes about various groups of people. Mainstream cultural workers in Northern countries - writers, artists, musicians, choreographers, film-makers as well as editors, producers, directors, technicians - operate within these scripts to reproduce continually the images conforming to the stereotypes. The news media, no matter how "objective" they may seek to become, in so far as they do not directly challenge dominant cultural constructions, will continue framing their reports within conventional modes of perception.

The dominant image of the violent Muslim also prompts journalists to identify Muslims as perpetrators of violent acts for which they are not responsible. In an article published in The Montreal Gazette, which was inquiring into the reasons why a group called the Lebanese Revolutionary Armed Faction was setting off bombs in Paris in 1986, the syndicated American columnist William Pfaff drew a scenario that encompassed the history of several Arab "Islamic states" (20/9/89: B3). In reality, the members of the terrorist organization
(Lebanese Revolutionary Armed Faction) were not Muslims: they were part of a clan resident in a Lebanese village and all adhered to the Greek Orthodox Church. Yet, this fact was not mentioned by Pfaff, who went on to make grand statements about a global "collision of two civilizations":

What began in 1948, in the conflict of Arabs with the new Israeli state, has grown in sinister progress to become a struggle of Moslems with Jews, of radicalized Moslems with moderate Moslems, of secular revolutionaries and Islamic integrists with non-Moslems, with one another and with the United States and the West.

It appears that the columnist was looking for an appropriate lead to introduce and provide validation for his views, and had found it in the current activities of a Lebanese group which seemed to fit the mould of "Islamic terrorists." Similarly, the narrator in a television documentary titled "The Sword of Islam," produced by Granada Television in the late 1980s, asked "Why do young men kidnap and kill, fight and die in the name of Islam?" as the visuals showed the aftermath of a bombing in Paris carried out by the Lebanese Revolutionary Armed Faction (Media, Islam and Muslims, 1990).

It is not only in Muslim-Christian confrontations that the Muslim is systematically portrayed as villain: John Kettle's Futureletter, a Toronto-based newsletter that forecasts socio-economic trends, stated in apparent reference to the contested site of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya, India,

The fanatical Muslim attempt to appropriate a Hindu shrine in northern India on the grounds that it had once been the site of a Muslim temple caused western heads to shake. (1/12/90: 5)
Despite wide coverage of the event, it is remarkable how the work of the right-wing Hindu revivalist movement in India to destroy the historic mosque was turned around to lay the blame on the familiar "fanatic," the Muslim.

Another manner in which the perceived Muslim threat to the North is depicted by the mass media is the presentation of "Islam" as disrupter of sacred Christian rituals. An article in The Montreal Gazette about an aerial Azerbaijani bombing of Armenia stated:

Yesterday morning, Sukhoi-25 jets raided residential areas of Stepanakert and dropped bombs near an Armenian church, Christ the Savior, in nearby Shusha at the precise moment the divine liturgy was being said, Armenian sources said. (24/8/92: B1)

The hijacking of an Air France airliner around Christmas-time in 1994 by some Algerian Islamists was described as "the Christmas hijacking." Responding to the declaration by Libya's Muammar Gadhafi in December 1991 that he was renouncing terrorism, The Ottawa Sun ran an editorial titled "Gift-wrapped lie" (9/12/91: 10). Next to the editorial was a cartoon based on a Christmas scene based on traditional portrayals of the three wise men of the East bearing gifts for the Christ-child. It portrayed Gadhafi a gift-bearer, sitting on a camel and holding a package labelled "LIBYAN FRANKINCENSE." A man dressed in traditional robes was shown shouting, "... SOMEBODY RUN THE FRANKINCENSE THROUGH THE METAL DETECTOR!" The implication was that Muammar Gadhafi, the leader of a mainly Muslim country, was attempting to smuggle a bomb into the manger where the founder of Christianity was born. The real
involvement of Gadhafi in sponsoring terrorist activities notwithstanding, such symbolic representations serve to present "Islam" as a fundamental threat to the moral bases of Northern civilization.

Invisible Palestinian Christians

The notion of "Muslim" has been conflated with "Arab" to such an extent that native Christianity in the Middle East has almost completely disappeared in dominant Northern discourses. There is little room for Christian Arabs who do not fit neatly into the polarized scenario of "Islam versus the West" conflict. Edward Said attempts to explain the relationship between Arab Christians and Muslims:

Islam is a religion, but it is also a culture; the Arabic language is the same for Muslims as it is for Christians, both of whom, believers and nonbelievers alike, are deeply affected - perhaps the better word is inflected - by the Koran, which is also in Arabic. Of course, there are distinctly Christian traditions inside the Islamic world: I myself belong to one. But it would be grossly inaccurate to think of them as separate and outside Islam, which includes us all. This, I think, is the most important point of all: Islam is something all Arabs share in and is an integral part of our identity. I may be speaking only for myself, but as an Arab Christian, I have never felt myself to be a member of an aggrieved or marginal minority. Being an Arab, even for a non-Muslim, means being a member of what the late scholar Marshall Hodgson called an Islamicate world or culture. (1993: 64)

Whereas the Christian traditions within Muslim societies, which are the oldest in Christendom, remain distinct with their own churches, festivals and religious customs, they are largely invisible to the Northern observer. Dominant Northern
discourses seem unable to rise above the binary worldview in which Christian and Muslim cultures are completely separate, if not hostile to each other.

This perspective made it easier to view the conflict between Israelis and Arabs as the Judeo-Christian West versus Arab Muslims. The existence of indigenous Arab Christians was downplayed in dominant media coverage over the past few decades in favour of presenting a neat, dichotomized picture in which all Arabs were Muslims and all Israelis were Jews. Even though some 20 per cent of Palestinians are of a Christian background, this fact is rarely reported. The conflict in the West Bank is implicitly portrayed as one between Israeli Jews and Muslim Palestinians. Muslim and Christian Israelis of Palestinian backgrounds also remain largely invisible in Northern mass media. One only seems to hear of soldiers of Muslim background serving in the Israeli army in occasional, negative circumstances. Similarly, the significant involvement of Christian Palestinians in the Palestinian Liberation Organization, the Palestinian National Assembly or other such organizations is also rarely mentioned. The Christian background of George Habbash, the leader the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - which was infamous for its violent terrorist activities during the 1970s - was hardly ever indicated.

One of the clearest tendencies of erasing native Christian presence in the Holy Land has occurred in the ritual reporting of the twice-yearly festivities surrounding Christmas and Easter in Bethlehem and Jerusalem, respectively. The media focus prior to the peace agreement between Israel and the PLO was
primarily on pilgrims from North America and Europe, with the participation of Palestinian Christians from these cities rarely being covered. When Palestinians were mentioned they usually appeared as disruptive elements. A headline in a December 24, 1988 issue of The Ottawa Citizen read: "Christmas is cancelled: Bethlehem shuts down as Palestinian uprising frightens away potential tourists" (B4). This seemed to imply that without foreign, primarily Western, pilgrims there could not be Christmas in Bethlehem. Presence of the Western subject/witness enables significant events around the world to take place, according to this discourse: December 25 appears to lose its sacredness in Bethlehem without her/his gaze.

The "Palestinian uprising" was the primarily negative factor here; although Israeli soldiers were occasionally shown in an unfavourable light, they were dominantly depicted as protectors of the Christian pilgrims. The operative dramaturgy was that of the Christian Westerner as the potential victim who was threatened by the Muslim Palestinian terrorist/villain and was guarded by the Jewish Israeli soldier. An article headlined "Pilgrims flock to Bethlehem service" in a December 26, 1991 edition of The Toronto Star, written by the paper's correspondent, stated:

The Christmas spirit returned briefly yesterday to the birthplace of Jesus.
For the first time in four years, the holy town of Bethlehem celebrated Christmas in a relaxed style with lights, international choirs and tourists from around the world.

...
Israeli troops lined the streets yesterday and sharpshooters were posted on every rooftop surrounding Manger Square.

Outside the church [of the Nativity], most Arab shopkeepers closed their stores in response to a call by Palestinian militants to show the world that the *intifadah* is not over. But many stores and restaurants adjacent to Manger Square remained open. Israeli soldiers temporarily lifted a curfew on the West Bank residents of Ramallah and El Bira to allow Christians to attend Christmas services. (A20)

"The Christmas spirit" had returned to Bethlehem because "international choirs and tourists from around the world" were present. Israeli soldiers, who temporarily cast a security net over Manger Square where the birth of Christ could be commemorated, were portrayed as the stabilizing factor: the effect was the re-enactment of the mythical event in which guardian angels overlooked the sacred space at the sacred time of the first Christmas. Even though there appeared to be local Christians in Ramallah and El Bira, the adjective "Palestinian" was never attached to them. Instead, "Palestinian" only occurred in relation to words such as "militants" and "intifadah." Even the victimized shopkeepers were "Arab," not "Palestinian." In the absence of clear identification of Palestinian Christians, "Palestinian" came almost exclusively to signify "Muslim" in dominant discourses. "For many Christians in the West ... the Palestinian is the concrete symbol of the old spiritual Other - the Muslim infidel of the Crusades" (Dossa, 1988: 516).

The apparent unease of Northern journalists with mentioning the existence of Palestinian Christians can also be viewed within the context of the relations
Illustration 8

Christians: afraid of Muslims, protected by Israelis.
Christmas is cancelled
Bethlehem shuts down as Palestinian uprising frightens away

The Christians are leaving. The implication is clear: they're afraid of the Muslims. They have become the Jews of Bethlehem.

At the Wailing Wall, border policeman stands guard as Cardinal O'Connor (centre right) prays with companions.
between Western Christianity and native Christians in the Holy Land over the last millennium.

The Crusades, which victimized Orthodox Christians along with Muslims, subsequent missionary activities that had the effect of dividing and weakening Middle Eastern churches, and the current collaboration of some Christian fundamentalists with Jewish fundamentalists have deeply wounded Christians in the area. In a sense, Christians in the Middle East have had to pay a double indemnity: they have been victimized by the anti-Arab prejudice of the "Christian" West, while at the same time they have come under the suspicion in their own societies because of the activities of their Western coreligionists. (Bishop, 1987: 126)

Since Western Christianity has had a generally antagonistic relationship with many Middle Eastern Christian groups and the political viewpoints of most Western journalists have traditionally favoured the Israeli side (Lichter, 1981: 43), mass media coverage has usually avoided references to Arab Christians except when they are in conflict with Muslims.

Problems between Jewish Israelis and Christians in the Holy Land are rarely reported, or when reported they lack the sustained focus given to Jewish-Muslim conflicts.

Despite soft pedalling Israeli rejectionism, and the US toleration that makes it possible, US media were unable to ignore a provocation against Christian residents of Jerusalem by Israeli religious militants, using Israeli government funds laundered through a dummy Panamanian company, bought up a lease for St. John's Hospice, owned by the Greek Orthodox Church, occupied by Christian families, and located only a few steps from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the Old City's Christian Quarter. The Easter Week takeover by singing and dancing Jewish religious fanatics marked the first non-Christian occupation in eight centuries. It provoked a demonstration by Christian and Muslim leaders who, when they attempted to remove a Star of David
installed over the entrance by the Jewish occupiers, were teargassed and dispersed by Israeli police. After the initial occupation, most of the US media dropped the story after reporting that "all but 20 Jewish settlers were ordered to evacuate" the hospice by an Israeli court. The fact that the 20, protected by Israeli police who prevent the former Christian occupants from entering even to remove their belongings, continue to occupy the building has gone unreported in mainstream American newspapers. (Lilienthal, 1990: 26)

Canadian mass media have similarly remained reticent about Jewish takeovers in Jerusalem's Christian quarter. Such information would interfere with the primary dramaturgy in the Holy Land which presents the Christian as victim of the Muslim villain, and the Jewish Israeli as her/his heroic protector.

In recent years, especially following the Israeli-PLO peace accord, it seems to have been more acceptable for journalists to write about the existence of native Christians in the Holy Land. However, this occurs frequently in contexts in which they are portrayed as being threatened by Muslims. The 1991 Christmas eve issue of The Toronto Star ran a front-page feature headlined: "Christians depart Mideast in droves." Citing problems arising from the Arab-Israeli conflict as well as "Islamic fundamentalism," it related how native Christians were emigrating to Northern countries. Even though people living in the West Bank were mentioned in the article, the writer never referred to them as "Palestinian Christians."

Similarly, on the previous day, the paper had carried a story with the following lead:

An Israeli family of Christian Arabs seeking asylum in Canada faces deportation to Israel where they fear Muslim extremists will kill them. (A12)
Northern journalists have, however, begun making references to "Palestinian Christians," albeit in contexts in which they are presented as victims. This form of reportage usually coincides with the Christmas season when there is heightened media focus on the Holy Land; indeed, it seems to have become integral to the ritual reporting of the event.

A December 28, 1992 Globe and Mail article datelined Bethlehem and written by its Middle East correspondent dwelt on how Christian Palestinians felt sandwiched between the Israeli occupation, on the one hand, and "Islamic radicalism," on the other.

Bethlehem endured its sixth Christmas under the strain of the Palestinian uprising amid growing fears that the Christian community here may never recover from the turmoil.

... in the West Bank, where Jesus Christ and Christianity were born, what little remains of the Palestinian Christian population is preparing to flee the vicious circle of military occupation and radicalism.

Another Palestinian Christian, waiting for approval of his visa application to the West, said he worries that Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement, will take over the Palestinian community in the next few years.

"A Palestinian state has never been closer to reality," he said, "but now it looks like it will turn out to be an Islamic state. I haven't prepared my kids for that." (A9)

Whereas "Palestinian" was previously linked with "Muslim," the notion of a future Palestinian state is now put within the framework of "Islamic radicalism."

The 1994 Christmas eve edition of The Ottawa Citizen had a story by the Southam News correspondent in the Middle East headlined, "Christian population continues to dwindle." Whereas most attention in 1995 had been
focused on Yassir Arafat's exultant rally to mark the hand over of Bethlehem by Israelis to the Palestinian Authority on December 23, the *New York Times* still managed to come up with "Palestinian Christians Feeling Like a Minority" in a year-end feature (31/12/95: E5). And an article by André Aciman in the newspaper's Sunday magazine indicated in a sidebar that "The Christians are leaving: The implication is clear: they're afraid of the Muslims. They have become the Jews of Bethlehem" (24/12/95: 24). In this narrative, Palestinian Christians had lost their Arabness: they had been brought into the Judeo-Christian fold in opposition to Palestinian Muslims. Once again, "Palestinian" had come to denote only "Muslim."

This is an example of how dominant discourses, upon their deconstruction by alternative discourses, attempt to reconstruct themselves. The harsh reaction of the Israeli military to the *intifadah* had caused a reassessment of the primary frames of mass media coverage in which Jewish Israelis were heroes and Palestinians were villains (this will be discussed below). The partial recasting of the Palestinian as a victim seems to have allowed for reporting on Palestinian Christians. Previously, the Palestinian was epitomized by the depiction of Yassir Arafat as arch-terrorist: there was little room Palestinian Christians in a dramaturgy that essentially presented "Muslim terrorists" in mortal combat with Jewish Israeli commandos. With the signing of the peace agreement between Israelis and Palestinians, the age-old model of "Islam versus Christendom" was
revived in emphasizing the role of the Palestinian Christian as the victim of the Palestinian Muslim.

**Christian Guilt and the State of Israel**

Relations between Northern Christians and Jews is an important influence in cultural constructions of the Holy Land in which Palestinian Christians have been almost non-existent. Biblical readings that confirm Israel as the Jewish homeland turn dominant Northern Christian opinion in favour of Zionism. Overlaid onto this is the powerful memory of the Holocaust during which, as most of contemporary Christendom stood by, a European state worked to eliminate Jewish presence through a policy of genocide that had been preceded by centuries of anti-semitism. European and North American governments had failed to come to the rescue of Jews who were being slaughtered *en masse* by Nazis during the Second World War.

The history of Western Christendom's treatment of the Jewish people and persistent persecution leading to attempted genocide, has created suspicion on one side, and overwhelming guilt on the other, of the Jewish-Christian divide. Christians need to accept a large measure of responsibility for the Holocaust, but accepting responsibility is different from being paralysed by guilt. (Bishop, 1987: 126)

The horror and guilt borne for the Holocaust by Northern Christians was vital in harnessing support for the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine in 1948. But, it was the exaggeration of Christian guilt for the consequences of the Nazi doctrine
that, ironically, "was equally contemptuous of Jews and Christians" (Dossa, 1987: 522), which seemed to engender the need to over-compensate by demonizing Palestinians.

This guilt remains open for exploitation by Zionist propagandists when criticism by gentiles of Jewish actions against Palestinians threatens Northern support for Israel.

Recall [Israeli Prime Minister] Menachem Begin's reply to international outrage over the 1982 invasion of Lebanon: "Don't you dare moralize to us when you remained silent as six million Jews were sent to the gas chambers." Hence, the incessant interjection of the Holocaust and stories of alleged anti-Semitism or potential anti-Semitism on the news, editorial and feature pages. When all else fails, the six million victims of Hitler are invoked to confront and confound all who question or criticize Israel. (Lilienthal, 1990: 25)

Gentile guilt sustains the image of the Jew as the victim *par excellence*, giving the latter the moral right to victimize others without losing her/his own status as the perpetual victim. While dominant Northern presentations of the Jewish Israeli are carried out within the myth of the Hero (who has carved out a nation out of a desert wilderness in the face of vicious Arab opposition), her/his past as a victim is brought to the fore when required to fulfil the propagandic function of maintaining her/his moral superiority. When threatened by alternative views, dominant discourses use such tactics to sustain entrenched modes of thinking.

In an analysis of several key texts written on the subject, Shiraz Dossa (1987) describes how Christian guilt about the Holocaust has been transferred to Palestinians and to Arabs and Muslims in general.
Beyond stripping the Palestinian cause of all vestiges of legitimacy, this scenario pitting a recrudescent Nazism in Arab garb against the remnants of Judaism elicited a flood of compassion for Israel and the Jews in the Western World. [Emil] Fackenheim sees this reaction as highly desirable, though inadequate. From his standpoint, what was required was not merely secular empathy but an unambiguous Christian declaration supporting the State of Israel, repudiating Palestinian claims, and contritely recognizing the Christian responsibility to Jews in the wake of Auschwitz. As he insists "Christians after the Holocaust ... must be Zionist on behalf not only of Jews but also of Christianity itself." (518)

For most Western Christians, Islam and the Arabs are indistinguishably synonymous, and that is why Christian defenders of Israel routinely invoke and disparage Islam in attacking the secular claims of the Palestinians. This strategy typically entails three distinctive ploys: denying the cultural particularity of Palestinians by labelling them merely Arab, assimilating the Palestinians into the ranks of Islam, and depicting the conflict as a Muslim war against the Jews. It recasts a political struggle into a religious Armageddon and transforms the victims into fanatical holy warriors bound by an archaic allegiance. Neither the injustice suffered by the Palestinians nor the legitimacy of their political claims are central to this Christian view. (524)

The particular form of anti-Semitism that had developed over two millennia of Christian-Jewish relations is Europe was thus projected onto Arab Muslims, who have had a very different approach to accommodating minorities, particularly Jewish and Christian ones, into their body politic.

In the decades leading to the establishment of the modern state of Israel in 1948 and following that event, members of Jewish communities living in certain Arab countries have suffered mistreatment and even persecution. These acrimonious relations between Muslims and Jews have been remarkably different from the harmony that generally existed in previous centuries. According to S.D.
Goitein, whose life-long endeavour involved the translation and analysis of texts produced by Jewish communities living under Muslim rule,

When the known facts are weighed, I believe it is correct to say that as a whole the position of the non-Muslims under Arab/Islam [sic] was far better than that of Jews in Medieval Christian Europe. (1966: 84)

Jews and Christians are referred to in the Koran as *ahl al-kitab,* "people of the book," in recognition of the biblical prophetic tradition. In medieval Muslim polities they were treated as "protected peoples," *ahl al-dhimma,* having autonomy within their own judicial systems governing family and personal law. For the most part they were incorporated as a legitimate part of the Muslim state in which they had rights and obligations that were different from those of Muslims. The *dhimmi* were taxed more heavily but were not obliged to participate in the military. There was little compulsion upon Jews and Christians to convert, although some did find that becoming a Muslim offered better opportunities of advancement in state bureaucracies (Fischel, 1937: 49). Religious minorities in medieval Muslim regimes enjoyed a status that was rare in Europe until recent centuries.

While there were several episodes of persecution, usually during periods of instability, there did not exist a theological sanctioning of systematic violence against minorities such as that which resulted from the characterization of Jews as "killers of the Messiah" by the Church Fathers (Reuther, 1985: 15-23). The following description of medieval Baghdad provides a glimpse into the treatment of the Jewish community in the capital of the Abbasid empire.
As one of the "protected" peoples the Jews fared on the whole even better than the Christians, and that in spite of several unfavourable references in the Koran. They were fewer and did not therefore present such a problem. In 985 al-Maqdisi [a geographer] found most of the money-changers and bankers in Syria to be Jews, and most clerks and physicians Christians. Under several caliphs, particularly al-Mu'tadid (892-902), we read of more than one Jew in the capital and the provinces assuming responsible state positions. In Baghdad itself the Jews maintained a good-sized colony which continued to flourish until the fall of the city [in 1258]. Benjamin of Tudela, who visited the colony about 1169 found it in possession of ten rabbinical schools and twenty-three synagogues, the principal one, adorned with variegated marble, was richly ornamented with gold and silver. Benjamin depicts in glowing colours the high esteem in which the head of the Babylonian Jews was held as a descendant of David and head of the community ... On his way to an audience with the caliph he appeared dressed in embroidered silk, wore a white turban gleaming with gems and was accompanied by a retinue of horsemen. Ahead of him marched a herald calling out: "Make way before our lord the son of David!" (Hitti, 1970: 357)

Medieval Muslim rule on the Iberian peninsula was also generally marked by an inter-communal harmony that strongly contrasted with the religious persecution that characterized the Counter-Reformation. When Jews along with Muslims were expelled by Philip II of Spain in the 15th century, it was in northern Africa and other Muslim lands that they sought refuge (Gilbert, 1969: 19).

Although the rights enjoyed by non-Muslims in Muslim societies were inferior to those which contemporary international conventions expect modern states to grant minorities, they were far superior to those existing in medieval Europe. The prophet Muhammad saw Islam as a continuation of the monotheistic message of the Jewish prophets and of Jesus. Some Koranic passages reflect the political conflicts that he had with Jewish tribes in Arabia who allied themselves
with pagan Arabs seeking to destroy the nascent Muslim community. Despite these temporal differences Muhammad did not repudiate the teachings of Judaism. However, the events of this century have led some Muslim theologians to use the Koranic verses relating to Muhammad's conflict with Jewish tribes in their anti-Zionist propaganda. They have also borrowed some anti-Jewish arguments from Europe to support their arguments against Israel. Such a polemical approach, which runs counter to a millennium of generally harmonious relations between Muslims and Jews, have in turn provided fodder for those Zionist propagandists who seek to portray "Islam" as fundamentally opposed to Judaism. Israeli embassies in Northern countries have distributed publications that present such a viewpoint (Gualtieri, 1985: 78-80).

There also appears to be a trend in some recent academic work that underplays the secure status that Jewish communities traditionally had in Muslim lands and projects the current tensions between Jewish Israelis and Muslim Arabs into the past. The work of Orientalist Bernard Lewis, "the doyen of Middle Eastern studies" (Zonis, 1990: 7), is a case in point. His Race and Color in Islam (1971) was republished in 1990 as Race and Slavery in the Middle East. According to The New York Times Book Review,

Mr. Lewis equates the image of racial innocence with other Western myths of the Islamic world that his other writings have done much to shatter. One such myth was the notion of an Islamic world that accepted Jews and allowed them to practice their religion freely. (Zonis, 1990: 7)
Working to correct the supposedly good image that "Islam" appeared to be acquiring in the North, Lewis seems to have seen it as his scholarly duty to put it back in its proper place (Said, 1978: 316). This tendency of Lewis's was also apparent in *The Jews of Islam* (1985) and in *Semitic and Anti-Semites* (1986), which sought to make links between European anti-semitism and current anti-Jewish propaganda in Arab countries.

Lewis everywhere restrains himself from making such inflammatory statements flat out; he always takes care to say that of course Muslims are not anti-Semitic the way the Nazis were, but their religion can too easily accommodate itself to anti-Semitism and has done so. (Said, 1978: 317)

He appears to see the dominant discourses on Muslim treatment of religious minorities as being threatened by alternative ones provided in works such as those of Goitein (1966), Fischel (1968), Tritton (1970) and Hitti (1970), and seems to be on a self-assigned mission to reaffirm the predominant view through continual repetition. His utterances and writings have received a higher profile in the mass media "because his standing in the political world of the Anglo-American Middle Eastern Establishment is that of the learned Orientalist, and everything he writes is steeped in the 'authority' of his field" (Said, 1978: 316).

The work of Lewis also seems to have been appreciated in the North since it has helped to transfer the guilt for centuries of anti-semitism and the Holocaust onto the Arab Muslim bent on the destruction of Israel. Well-established images of the Muslim as violent and barbaric have facilitated the placing of the mantle of anti-semitism on her/his shoulders. Centuries of persecution of Jews by Christian
Europeans has thus been allowed to be eclipsed by the Arab-Israeli conflict. Downplaying the existence of Christian Arabs also helps to emphasize the binary model in which the Arab is the nefarious villain who is incited by his fanatical "Islamic" faith to kill Jews.

**Biblical Views of Israel**

While most dominant Northern discourses tend to emphasize the secular character of Israel, the biblical claim of the Jews to the Holy Land remains an implicit and powerful argument even against the rights of native Christians and Muslims whose ancestors had also lived there for thousands of years. For example, an article in the *Toronto Life* magazine discussing the media coverage of Israel stated:

> Israel was created by survivors, its existence a debt that civilization repaid to the Jews because of their historical and spiritual roots in the region as well as their extraordinary suffering. (Hayes, 1988: 62)

Underlying this statement, which spoke volumes, were dominant discourses about the Jewish state. In saying that "Israel was created by survivors," the author implied that nothing existed in that land before the arrival of the Jewish victim/hero. Israel's "existence [was] a debt that civilization repaid to the Jews because of their historical and spiritual roots in the region" - "civilization" by implication seems limited to the Eurocentric Christian world, which, within its particular biblical perspectives saw the Holy Land as the homeland only of Jews.
Northern support for the creation of Israel was also compensation for the Jews' "extraordinary suffering" in Europe. It was for the Northern Christendom to give the Holy Land to Jews in order to repay its own debts, thus disregarding the history and rights of other peoples (including indigenous Christians) who have also lived in the same land.

While mainstream propagandists writing in favour of Israel are generally loathe to resort directly to biblical proofs, a significant portion of Christians appear to believe in at least the moral if not divine right of Jews to possess a state in the Holy Land. References from the Bible are common currency among supporters of Israel from the American religious right. A mainstay in "Christian fundamentalist" magazines such as The Plain Truth is the theme of the coming Armageddon in the Middle East. The formation of the modern state of Israel is presented as evidence that biblical prophecies can predict contemporary events and in turn validate its existence. Contemporary history is woven into an apocalyptic scenario that culminates in Christ's return to earth. According to John Walvoord, author of Armageddon, Oil and the Middle East Crisis:

Israel and the nations of the world have been prepared for the final drama. Most important, Israel is back in the land, organized as a political state, and eager for her role in the end-time events. Today Israel desperately needs the covenant of peace promised in prophecy. Largely because of the demands of the Palestinians, Israel will not be able to achieve a satisfactory settlement in direct negotiations. Russia is poised to the north of the Holy Land for entry in the end-time conflict. Egypt and other African countries have not abandoned their desire to attack Israel from the south. Red China in the east is now a military power great enough to field an army as
large as that described in the book of Revelation. Each nation is prepared to play out its role in the final hours of history. Our present world is well prepared for the beginning of the prophetic drama that will lead to Armageddon. Since the stage is set for this dramatic climax of the age, it must mean that Christ’s coming for His own is very near ... (1990: 228)

Such arguments by “Christian fundamentalists,” who forward sweeping divine plans for human destiny, serve to justify Israeli hegemony over its Arab neighbours. Despite the large corpus of reports detailing injustices suffered by Palestinians at the hands of Israelis, it is unable to counterbalance the Bible-based claims for those who believe in them staunchly. And the evidence of large-scale and systematic Israeli destruction of Palestinian agricultural infrastructure is eclipsed by the myth of how Jewish settlers made “the desert bloom.”

Biblical images of Israel have not only affected the thinking of the religious among Christians. Teddy Kollek, a former mayor of Jerusalem, remarked:

‘There is a hole in the floor of the nave of the church of the Holy Sepulchre in the Old City of Jerusalem. In ancient times, it was believed that Jerusalem was the center of the world and that this hole was the center of the center - the very navel of the universe. Sometimes I have the impression that the foreign correspondents who reside here, and the hundreds more who visit every year, still believe that.’ (Friedman, 1989: 427)

Most Western news organs which have correspondents in the Middle East are based in Jerusalem: the effect of the Bible on their views about the city and Israel have often been manifested in their work (Lichter, 1981).
The religious image of Israel appears to have been a factor even as decisions were being made by colonial authorities in London to prepare for its eventual establishment.

As Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister when the 1917 Balfour Declaration promising the Jews a homeland was issued, once told the Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann, the names Judea and Samaria, and Jerusalem "are more familiar to me than the names of Welsh villages of my own childhood." (Friedman, 1989: 428)

Christian pilgrims travelling to the Holy Land tend to exhibit such beliefs that appear to transcendentalize Israel from being just one among "the community of nations."

The tourism authorities of Israel seem to find this phenomenon useful in attracting the bulk of its clients, most of whom come from Europe and North America. Travel sections of Canadian newspapers, which largely cater to the needs of the local tourism industry and of travel agencies arranging foreign trips, also capitalize on the desire of Canadian Christians to re-trace the steps of characters from the Bible and others from Christian history. For example, a front page article on a Montreal Gazette Travel section was Headlined "ISRAEL: Biblical co-ordinates can help you hike in the Judean desert":

Pass the Mount of Olives and Gethsemane and take the Jericho Road outside Jerusalem. Turn right at the Dead Sea. Those biblical co-ordinates led writer Jonathan Auerbach to the lowest point on Earth, Israel's Judean desert, a breathtaking wilderness at the geological crossway of three continents that is one of the most historic, yet least-travelled, places in Israel.

(16/5/87, II)
Illustration 9

Reporting on the Holy Land.
Arab 'propensity to violence' at root of Middle East conflict: Israeli envoy

Israel a rational nation

Tourism booming in the Holy Land

Pilgrims trickle back for vigil in Bethlehem

ISRAEL

Biblical co-ordinates can help you hike in the Judean desert

Israeli minister sees tourism as peace dividend in Mideast

Pilgrims retrace Christ's steps

JERUSALEM (AP) - Pilgrims observed Good Friday by retracing the last steps of Jesus Christ on a 7-kilometer (4.4-mile) pilgrimage along the Via Dolorosa, the path Jesus walked in Jerusalem's Old City.

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Pilgrims retrace Christ's steps
Such scriptural references serve to eliminate distinctions between the religious worldview and the contemporary political reality. They enhance the scenario in which Jewish Israelis are seen as acting out a heroic biblical drama in the places whose names come straight from the Old Testament. The historical claims of the Palestinians to the same places are symbolically eliminated along with the erasing of their Arabic names. While the Northern mass media did not adopt as normative the Israeli government's references to "Judea and Samaria," the use of "the Temple Mount" in Jerusalem - a primary focus of confrontation between Jews and Muslims - seems to have been preferred to "Haram al-Shareef" by journalists. In this it seemed to lend greater legitimacy to Jewish historical claims over this piece of land than those of Muslim Palestinians. (Similarly, the war fought between Israel against Egypt and Syria in October 1973 is usually called "the Yom Kippur War" in dominant Northern discourses, as opposed to "the Ramadan War," which is common in Arab discourses, or even the more neutral "October War.")

It appears to have been the deliberate policy of the Israeli government to exploit the dual feelings of romanticism and guilt that Northern Christian audiences had towards Jews after World War II. Abba Eban, a former Israeli cabinet member stated:

The entire region rejected us. We were forming a state for people who were not yet here. And we were not a majority in our country. We had to seize the ears of the world. We could not just rely on pure juridical arguments. We could not argue like Ghana. We had to make ourselves exceptional. So we based our claim on the exceptionality of Israel, in terms of the affliction suffered by its people, and in terms of our historical and spiritual lineage. We
knew we were basically appealing to a Christian world for whom the biblical story was familiar and attractive, and we played it to the hilt. (Friedman, 1989: 438)

The Northern Christian perspective of Israel, which was framed within the dual perspectives of the Bible and the Holocaust, seemed eager to embrace the carefully crafted image of Jews returning to reclaim the Holy Land as their rightful property. It thus appears that the Israeli government has consciously sought to blur history, fusing the identities of contemporary Jewish Israelis with their biblical counterparts.

Public relations techniques have been used since the establishment of the state to make this case to Northern Christian audiences. According to Art Steven's *The Persuasion Explosion* (1985),

In the early 1950s, when the newly formed State of Israel was struggling for recognition in the court of world opinion, America was largely apathetic. [Edward] Gottleib who at the time headed his own public relations firm, suddenly had a hunch about how to create a more sympathetic attitude toward Israel. He chose a writer and sent him to Israel with instructions to soak in the atmosphere of the country and create a novel about it. The book turned out to be *Exodus*, by Leon Uris. His novel did more to popularize Israel with the American public than any other single presentation through the media.14

The novel and the subsequent film (which is frequently rebroadcast on American television) narrated the story of a shipload of European Jews who sought to make the journey to Palestine in face of opposition from the British colonial authorities. It deliberately evoked the well-entrenched biblical script of the exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt to the land of Israel. Northern publics have therefore
purposely been encouraged in their own blending of tales from the Bible with the contemporary political realities of Israel through such propaganda. Quoting from the Book of Samuel, the Zion Quarterly, "a publication of Christian Friends of Israel," identified the contemporary conflict of Israelis and Palestinians as that which existed between the biblical Israel and the Philistines (Franklin, 1993). Biblical histories and the technological myth of the Nation are thus fused to grant sovereignty to Jews over the land demarcated by the contemporary borders of Israel.

Ironically, it was the overturning of a biblical image which had become a primary frame for Israeli-Arab confrontations that appears to have been key to a shift that took place in Northern sentiments about Jewish Israelis in the late 1980s. The Israeli army had generally been scripted in dominant Northern discourses as personifying the biblical David challenged by the Arab Goliath (El-Mohtar, 1982: 25). Three million Jews were frequently shown as being threatened by a "sea" of 200 million Arabs. This was at the basis of the symbolic construction of the Israeli hero who triumphed in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds. While the invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and the massacre of Palestinians in Sabra and Shatila by the Phalangist allies of Israel did raise eyebrows in Europe and North America, it was the ruthless Israeli reaction to the intifadah over several years which led to pointed questions about the Jewish state's human rights record. When Palestinian boys began using home-made slings to throw stones at Israeli soldiers armed with automatic weapons, the image of the Arab Goliath suffered a serious blow.
Adolescents from the West Bank and Gaza seemed to be appropriating the role of David in their skirmishes against Jews armed with rifles. The deadly reaction of the Israeli military to the intifadah, which was recorded by Western television crews, was probably responsible for the drop in the high level of support that Israel had received from the American public and government. Simultaneously, Palestinians lost some of the dark lines with which they had been drawn. The Northern mass media suddenly discovered that all Palestinians were not terrorists and that they could even sit down with Israelis to discuss peace.

The mass media's placing of the relations between Muslims, Christians, and Jews in the Holy Land within symbolic constructions of the hero, villain and victim has had profound political consequences. Since Western economic and military support for Israel has been vital for Israel, the latter has made special efforts to ensure that Jews were cast as victims or heroes and Palestinians as villains. Operating according to a cognitive model influenced by the Bible and the Holocaust, Western journalists seemed to have acquiesced in promoting this view. The Jewish Israeli has dominantly been portrayed as the victim of Arab violence and as the heroic settler who has guarded her/his ancient land and made it bloom. On the other hand, the Palestinian Muslim has appeared as a fanatical savage seeking to destroy the fragile Israeli state; while the Palestinian Christian, overshadowed by the Christian pilgrim from the North, has been rendered almost non-existent. Even though some changes have occurred in these cultural constructions, they continue to inform dominant discourses about the Israeli-
Palestinian relations as well as the political decisions made in Northern capitals about the two peoples.

Notes


2. Los Angeles Times news service, "Soldier jailed 7 years is innocent." The Montreal Gazette (25/5/87: F8). This was a story about an Israeli army officer from the Circassian Muslim minority. Members of the Druze minority in Israel also serve in the country's armed forces.

3. Also see Associated Press, "Bethlehem pilgrims celebrate Christmas," The Montreal Gazette (24/12/86); Associated Press and Reuter, "Pope prays for peace during Easter strife," The Ottawa Citizen (4/4/88: A6); Associated Press, "Bethlehem won't celebrate Christmas," The Ottawa Citizen (29/11/88: A6); "Israel: Christians mark Easter rites," The Ottawa Citizen (3/3/91: A10); Arthur Charity, "Christmas in Israel," The Ottawa Citizen (23/12/91: A9); Associated Press, "Little joy found in Bethlehem," The Ottawa Citizen (23/12/92); and "Peace reigns for Christmas: Warring factions across the world put differences aside temporarily," The Ottawa Citizen (26/12/92).

4. When New York's Cardinal O'Connor visited the Wailing Wall in 1987, printed on the front page of The Montreal Gazette's world section was a large picture of him and two other Roman Catholic churchmen praying at the site, with an Israeli border policeman carrying an automatic rifle in the foreground. A prominent title stated: "The guardian angel" (5/1/87: B1).


7. Mark Levine, a professor of religion, wrote to the New York Times Magazine that Aciman's "article is so full of traditional Orientalist clichés and anti-Arab remarks that I plan to use it next term as an example of how religion, politics and bigotry still substitute for substantive discourse on the Middle East" (14/1/96: 8).


9. The consequences are that the blame for any terrorist activities against Jews immediately falls upon Muslims, as in the 1994 bombing of a Jewish community centre in Buenos Aires. It was not until one and a half years later, having failed to find any evidence of an "Islamic" link that Argentinean authorities arrested neo-Nazis, some of whom were members of the country's army (The Ottawa Citizen, 2/12/95: A6).

10. According to the Palestine Human Rights Information Center in Jerusalem, by 1991 Israeli occupation authorities had demolished 1,860 Palestinian homes, uprooted 103,120 trees, and confiscated 97,674 acres of Palestinian land in the West Bank and Gaza. (Palestine Mission to Canada, 28/6/91: 2).
11. "Modern Israel is not viewed by most Christians as a new country or a new story, but rather as the modern extension of a very old country and a very old drama involving God and man. Itzik Yaacoby, who heads the East Jerusalem Development Corporation, which is responsible for maintaining the Old City of Jerusalem and all its Christian, Muslim, and Jewish holy places, noticed that most Christian tourists he showed around the city felt as though they were walking through the pages of the Bible. The notion that Israel was just another twentieth-century nation-state created by the United Nations after World War II was totally alien to them " (Friedman, 1989: 429).


13. A news report broadcast on CBC Newsworld at 12:00 on Friday April 12, 1996 from Jerusalem by correspondent Anna-Marie Tremonti about Hizbollah's and Israeli's reciprocal bombings of each other's territory, brought the audience's attention to the fact that Jewish Israelis were preparing for the Sabbath. However, it neglected to mention that Friday is also the day of communal prayers for Muslims. This form of reporting is the result of basing journalistic discourses on the dominant religious-cultural heritage of the North, locating news correspondents in Jerusalem to cover the entire Middle East, and disregarding the presence of Arabs and Muslims in domestic Northern audiences.

Chapter 11

Containing "Islam"
"Islam" as Post-Cold War Other

This chapter explores how "Islam" has re-emerged culturally as a primary Other in the aftermath of the Cold War. John Esposito indicates in his book The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality? that the "threat vacuum" following half a century of confronting the Red peril "has given rise to the search for new enemies" (1993: 7). At the end of the long standoff between the West and the Soviet bloc there has emerged, apart from the many territorial and ethnic conflicts around the world, an international conflict model that pits the North against the South. Writing about the significance of the Gulf War (1990-91) on international relations, Richard Falk says that we are confronted by

a master project that has proclaimed a geopolitical destiny under the banner of a new world order. This project is still being constituted, but it is also a resumption of what seemed successful to power wielders in the nineteenth century, "a long peace" at the geopolitical core of techno-financial power and one-sided mastery over the non-Western world. The Gulf War revives the plausibility of aspiring to mastery, and with almost religious finality and patriarchal zeal, attaching the vision of Northern domination over the South to the militarization of space. This conception of order is quite content to witness the spread of Lebanonization in countries of the South, reserving the interventionary option for exceptional cases where crucial chokepoints are threatened by hostile forces, or where a country in the South seems on the verge of acquiring the sort of military capability and political will that endangers the sense of Northern invulnerability. (1991a: 273)

Even though this global realignment of forces may not be as deliberate and conscious as Falk suggests, it has been witnessed in the growing tensions between certain Northern and Southern countries. This reordering of alliances seems to have begun developing after Mikhail Gorbachev signalled his intentions in the late
1980s to bring the Cold War to an end. As former communist states seek to join Western multi-state organizations such as the G-7, NATO, and EU, they increasingly align themselves together with the West and in opposition to the South.

Some media commentators have tended to see the Gulf War as an inevitable first battle in the emerging conflict between the North and the South. The New World Order for them was one in which Europe, North America and Australasia would close ranks and arm themselves to fight against other continents. Peter C. Newman, a columnist for Maclean's magazine, wrote:

> there are many Saddam Husseins; Canada may have to become more military as the cost of survival in this dangerous age. That was all supposed to have become ancient history with the end of the Cold War, but it turns out that both sides were arming for the wrong battle. It will be the regional warlords in the Middle East, South America and the Far East who will be managing the world's agenda in the 1990s. (28/1/91: 46)

The Gulf War seemed to have prompted the surfacing of a neo-colonial attitude that made it acceptable for the West to attack a developing country - indeed it served to rationalize the massive assault on Iraq. The Toronto-based Financial Post reprinted an article by Peregrine Worstone of the London Sunday Telegraph in its "Insight" section, stating,

> The riches of the First World provoke passionate envy in the Third World, and so do all the other appurtenances of civilization. We are envied both materially and non-materially, and the Third World would dearly love to pull us down. Nothing blocks this aim except Western strength. And it is this Western strength which must on no account be trammeled...
The aim must be for America to win an overwhelming victory; for Western technology to prove devastatingly, chasteningly superior...

... it is beginning to look as if Saddam has given the West a chance once again to establish its unchallengeable pre-eminence in a manner impregnable at once to moral obloquy and military resistance.

Not only will our arms have prevailed in a most spectacular fashion. So also will our ideals [emphasis added]. (25/1/91: 10)

While such overt statements that viewed the Gulf War in terms of a North-South conflict were not common, they seemed to be implicit in much of the conflict's media coverage. The war was generally portrayed as a battle between Western civilization - evidenced in its technological superiority - and "Islamic" barbarism - personified in the crude violence of Saddam Hussein.

Hamid Mowlana sees the Gulf War underlining three major trends characterizing the relationship between the mass media and international relations since World War I: the increasing alignment of the international media with the superpower-dominated global order, shifting the mobilization of public opinion from the national to the global level as "a prerequisite for the conduct of modern international warfare," and the decline of the roles of government and the media as watchdogs over each other.

In contemporary global politics this process has meant international media's continual support of the status quo, including cold war systems, new détente between the superpowers, and "old" and "new" world orders. In this meaning, mainstream global communication and media systems, including major news agencies, newspaper networks, and now worldwide television systems, facilitate the flow of information and move more within and among the international elite networks. In terms of domestic constituency, the media's supreme loyalty is to patriotism, the nation-state system, and the national interest. Although the media's
sphere's of operation and coverage has become global their worldviews have remained fairly parochial. (Mowlana, 1992: 31)

Primary audiences of transnational media networks largely remain the publics and media institutions of their home-base countries. But when elite powers are involved in inter-national confrontations, the transnational media agencies - mostly based in the North - generally align themselves with the hegemonic position.

Washington has been intervening increasingly in the South, where there had previously existed a certain balance of power between the US and USSR. Whereas after the fall of South Vietnam the US had largely restricted itself to supplying various Southern interests with arms and sending small contingents of military "advisers," it has since 1986 carried out direct attacks against Libya, Grenada, Panama and Iraq. (It has also sent troops under UN and NATO auspices to Somalia, Haiti and Bosnia-Herzegovina.) Although the United States has emerged as the dominant global force, it appears to have adopted the policy of not contesting Russian interventions in former southern Soviet republics such as Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Tajikistan. Moscow's brutal invasion of the Russian federation's rebellious southern republic of Chechnya in December 1994, apart from prompting some Western diplomatic protests, was treated as an "internal matter." Such incursions are justified in dominant international discourses that present Northern powers as guardians of the global order which "terrorist states" from the South periodically threaten. Integration propagandists engineer world-
wide consensus on the legitimacy of the global hegemony of Northern powers by naming Southern "terrorism" as an international problem, by defining its causes as Oriental "irrationality" and then prescribing Northern military action as a solution.

A key target of the growing Northern aggressiveness are certain Muslim countries, since Northern ideologues have identified "Islamic fundamentalism" as manifesting a major global opponent. However, the emergence of "Islam" as an ideological and military rival of the contemporary West is not a recent development. In a post-World War II assessment of the new international role of the United States, the forces "contending with the American idea" were principally seen as being "communism and Islam" (Graves, 1951: 78). According to Edward Said,

Out of such a concern, and as a contemporary adjunct to the more backward-looking American Oriental Society, was born the entire vast apparatus for research on the Middle East ... [including] the Middle East Institute, founded May 1946 in Washington ..., the Middle East Studies Association, the powerful support of the Ford and other foundations, the various federal programs of support to universities, the various federal research projects, research projects carried out by such entities as the Defense Department, the RAND Corporation, and the Hudson Institute, and the consultative and lobbying efforts of banks, oil companies, multinationals, and the like. It is no reduction to say of all this that it retains, in most of its general as well as its detailed functioning, the traditional Orientalist outlook which had been developed in Europe. (1978: 295)

However, the threat from "Islam" seemed to have remained largely dormant during the height of the Cold War when dominant international discourses viewed the entire world as belonging either to the American or the Soviet camp. With
Marxism currently in retreat around the world, "Islam" seems to be the only other global ideology standing in the way of the complete triumph of Western capitalism.4

This is recognized by Northern integration propagandists who have increasingly been portraying the Muslim as a primary enemy of the North. Some who are loathe to let go of the idea of a still-extant danger from Marxism manage to combine both Marxism and "Islam" into a common peril:

A militant Marxist Islamic Middle East could be one of the most threatening things to world peace. We may have to face the inevitable consequences of pan-Arabism and pan-Islam and realize that, in one sense, all Arabia [sic] may be our enemy and we simply cannot go on arming, equipping and encouraging any of these people.5

With or without a communist tinge, the notion of the "Islamic bogey" has become part of dominant global discourses.

A number of recent publications such as those by John L. Esposito (1993), Graham E. Fuller and Ian O. Lesser (1995), Jochen Hippler and Andrea Lueg (1995), and Fred Halliday (1996) have sought to analyze the "Islamic threat" and have concluded that Western fears are largely unfounded. However, Samuel P. Huntington, Professor of the Science of Government at Harvard University, has outlined future scenarios in which the West will be embroiled in a global struggle against "the Rest," in which "a central focus of conflict will be between the West and several Islamic-Confucian states" (1993: 48). He even proposed a short-term strategy whose aims included: "to limit the expansion of the military strength of
Confucian and Islamic states," and "to exploit difference and conflicts among Confucian and Islamic states" (49). An article in The Economist on "The New World Order" also raised the spectre a "new Islamic power" which "might well find a natural ally in China" in opposition to the teaming up of Europe and Russia (8/1/94: 23). American television dramas frequently play on the latent fear of a combined communism and "Islam."

According to Timothy W. Luke (1991: 327-31), the operative script during the Second World War in which a number of nations came together to defeat evil was reactivated during the Gulf War. The image of the military Other can accommodate different enemies in various periods. "Final nodes" of propagandists' scripts "are empty (default values), so that they can be applied to different situations by filling in such terminal nodes with specific information" (van Dijk, 1988: 21). As in World War II, the US bore the burden of leadership in the Gulf War since - in the words of George Bush - "only the United States of America has had both the moral standing and the means to back it up" (Luke, 1991: 334). This script had been successfully applied during the Cold War when the post-1945 Western alliance of countries engaged in ideological battle, along with proxy military conflicts, against another grouping in Eastern Europe. The bipolar global conflict between the Allies and the Axis powers was transformed into that between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, the former led by the United States and latter by the Soviet Union - termed "the Evil Empire" by president Reagan.

With the demise of the communist bloc at the eve of the Gulf War, the same script
was applied to the new conflict. In dominant discourses, the United Nations Coalition led by America became "the Allies" and Saddam Hussein was cast in the role of the nefarious Hitler. Peace would reign in the New World Order of George Bush once the evil of "Islamic terrorism" had been exorcised by the good firepower of the Allies.

It is with amazing facility that the Cold War script is being adjusted to accommodate a new global conflict with the Muslim Other. As if to confirm the practical ease with which this can be done, one headline exultantly proclaimed during the Gulf War: "Cold War battle plan transferred to gulf" (The Globe and Mail, 1991: A9). The terminal node of this script, which had previously been occupied by the Soviet Bloc, was filled by Iraq. The title of an article written by Robert Kaplan, initially published in the Atlantic Monthly and reprinted in the Globe, read "The cross and the crescent: A cultural curtain is descending in Bosnia to replace the Berlin Wall, a curtain separating the Christian and Islamic worlds" (7/8/93: D3). The global war between "us" and "them," previously scripted as an ideological conflict between capitalism and communism, is being reconstructed as a religious war between the "Christian and Islamic worlds" by such propagandists. An article in John Kettle's Futureletter assessing "The Islamic threat" highlighted the predictions of "intelligent" and "practical people" such as former US Secretary of Defence, Caspar Weinberger and writers for The Economist, Life magazine, The Globe and Mail who warned that the next "millennial collision" would be between "Islam" and the "industrialized free
Dominant discourses perpetuate themselves through continual self-reference, thus imparting the semblance of uncontested truth.

The London-based *Economist* has made predictions about the reordering of the world's patterns of power in which the United States, Europe, Russia, China and "an Islamic power" would be the major players.

... an Islamic power, may never come into existence; but if it did, it would doubtless give the gun priority over the purse. A new state created out of countries in the western part of the Muslim world, professing the principles of Islam, would have a clear-cut ideology in open competition with that of the modern West. If most of its people were Arabs, it would possess the further unifying force of a shared language. And it would have the power of oil, which could be denied to its adversaries or sold for buying the weapons with which to fight them. This pugnacious new arrival would confront two ready-made enemies. One would be Europe, its centuries-old quarrel with western Islam still liable to flare up over places like Bosnia. Then would come Russia, whose border with Islam in central Asia remains a blur. It is by no means impossible that a new Islamic power would get into a fight with both Europe and Russia - and, if it did, it might look for an ally to China, which also has a border quarrel with Russia. (8/1/94: 23)

Well known stereotypes of "Islam" were used to construct this scenario: violent tendencies, historical feuds, anti-modernist ideology, and oil wealth. The Northern mega-states would enter into conflict with Southern ones. A cover story in a later issue of the British weekly did attempt to make a distinction between the various manifestations of "the Islamist movement," and concluded that

Islamic fundamentalism is certainly not like communism, something to be resisted tooth and nail. It may be more like socialism, an -ism with many facets, some entirely compatible with liberal democracy, some more hostile to it, some perhaps wholly at
odds with it. Living with Islam involves discrimination, as well as vigilance. (18/3/95: 14)

However, the front-page photo accompanying the write-up, titled "Living with Islam," was of a lone man prostrating in prayer towards a wall on which rested an assault rifle. This article was partially reproduced in The Globe and Mail, where it was headlined "Living with radical Islam: Welcome the good, resist the bad" (20/3/95: A17). However, as with the Economist, its illustration provided a violent image of "Islam": it was a drawing of a muezzin calling the faithful to prayer, but with his uplifted left hand having become what appeared to be a minaret on fire. "Living with Islam" was thus presented as being vigilant against a religion which had essentially violent tendencies.

Journalists have also made justifications for the continued spending on military-industrial complexes "A New Kind of Containment: Stopping a resurgent Iraq - and Iran, too - will require a heavy US military commitment" (Newsweek, 12/7/93: 30). ("Containment" had been a key strategy against the Soviet bloc during the Cold War.) An article from the Congressional Quarterly on the Central Intelligence Agency, which was distributed to newspapers by the Scripps Howard News Service, advised both politicians and the mass readership that:

Today, the greater political threat is a long way from Moscow - in newly independent republics like Kazakhstan, where hundreds of former Soviet nuclear weapons are stored, in the streets of Medellin, Colombia, where the drug cartels are based, and in the mosques of Iran, where the seeds of Islamic fundamentalism are sown (The Ottawa Citizen, 26/12/92: B3).9
The US intelligence services, which had hitherto spent billions of dollars on activities against the Other in the form of the Eastern bloc, must now shift its sights southwards. This is not a difficult case to make to audiences who already adhere to negative cognitive models of the South and of "Islam." Israeli prime minister Shimon Peres described "Islamic fundamentalism" in the following manner:

It has many of the characteristics of communism. It is fanatic, it is ideological, and it claims like communism, that the ends justify the means ... [but] most of all, it has the same inclination to export its ideas.¹⁰

NATO, looking for a new role in the post-Cold War era, was re-packaged by the organization's former secretary-general, Willy Claes, as a bulwark against "Islamic fundamentalism" which he said had replaced communism as a new threat to liberal democracy (The Globe and Mail, 6/2/95: A20).¹¹ Now that the Soviet bloc no longer exists, the military organization can expand to include some of its former communist rivals Eastern Europe, and turn its guns towards the "southern front."

Sustained international mass media depiction of the conflicts between Northern interests and "Islamic" elements such as Iran, Iraq, Libya, Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Chechnya, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia as well as Muslim communities living in Europe, North America and Australasia, has supported this cognitive model of a global struggle reminiscent of that between the West and the communist bloc. A few articles have appeared in newspapers, usually penned by
Illustration 10

"Islam" as a post-Cold War Other.
NATO chief warns of Islamic extremists

"As dangerous as communism was"

ANALYSIS / Once a safeguard against Soviet expansion, Ankara has become a bridge to the republics, counter to Tehran's influence, barrier to Iraq's breakup

Turkey's strategic role widens

Cold War battle plan transferred to gulf

BY COLIN MACKENZIE
Washington Bureau

WAGING OF THE WAR

THE BALKANS
The cross and the crescent

A CULTURAL CURTAIN is descending in Bosnia to replace the Berlin Wall. A CURTAIN SEPARATING THE CHRISTIAN AND ISLAMIC WORLDS

A New Kind of Containment

Stopping a resurgent Iraq—and Iran, too—will require a heavy U.S. military commitment

Le Turquie, rempart contre l'islamisme radical

L'islam, la nouvelle utopie
guest writers\textsuperscript{12} but also occasionally by staff writers, commenting on these ideological constructions.\textsuperscript{13} The attitude of Northern powers towards Muslim countries has appeared to be systematically harsher than that towards non-Muslim countries, notes Gwynne Dyer, a columnist for \textit{The Toronto Star}, in a rare manifestation of an alternative discourse:

It's not exactly a conscious plot, but then these things rarely are. It's more a matter of cultural reflex and ancient prejudice, reinforced by that well-known phenomenon whereby people's ideas mysteriously coincide with their interests. The Pentagon's contingency planners are not immune to this failing. Consider the cut-off of American aid to Pakistan over that country's nuclear weapons, or the huge effort to uproot the Iraqi nuclear weapons program, or Washington's obsession about Iran's nuclear ambitions. These are all legitimate concerns, certainly, but where is the parallel concern over India's nuclear weapons capability, or Israel's?

Or look at the American-led campaign to impose United Nations sanctions against Libya for two airliner bombings: a Pan Am 747 over Lockerbie, Scotland in 1988 and a French UTA airliner over Niger in 1989. The case is serious and so is the evidence, but official U.N. sanctions? That's swatting a fly with a sledgehammer. There is a pattern emerging, a get-tough-with-Muslims pattern ...(16/3/92: A17)

"Islam" is dominantly seen as the epicentre of Southern instability and violence against the global order. Various Muslim groups are viewed as part of an international, "Islamic," anti-Northern, anti-modernist and anti-democratic tendency, with "Iranian fundamentalism" as the darkest demon and the ideological core of this movement.

Indeed, for some the Cold War seems to have become an historical "sideshow" compared to the millennial struggle between Christians and Muslims.
In our western shortsightedness, we think modern history is the 50-year story of the Cold War. That was an interesting, important struggle, but it's only a sideshow compared with the main conflict of the past 1,300 years - the one between Islam and Christianity.14

This brings us a full circle: integration propagandists who are building "Islam" as the new peril seem to be in the process of erasing the memory of the Cold War. In proclaiming Mikhail Gorbachev its progressive "Man of the Decade," Time magazine could begin to print articles which deconstructed the dominant Western discourses' demonization of the "Red Menace": "Gorbachev is helping the West by showing that the Soviet threat isn't what is used to be - and, what's more, that it never was."

The renewed image of "Islam" as a primary Other has developed in dominant international discourses despite the cooperation between Western powers and governments of countries with Muslim majorities like Egypt, Turkey and Indonesia, and even that with conservative Muslim states such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Integration propagandists can rely on the strength of the traditional Northern antipathy against "Islam" as well as on the inability of the "current affairs man" to discern contradictions in propaganda (Ellul, 1969: 47).

The presence of the military forces of various Arab and non-Arab Muslim countries during the Gulf War on the side of the American-led United Nations Coalition was primarily symbolic in a conflict that was won by the overwhelming technological superiority of Western forces. In fact, Time magazine unabashedly declared "They Don't Need to Fight: The Islamic allies deployed in the Arabian
desert have already done their job even if they never fire a single shot" (12/11/90: 48). At the populist level in various Western societies the conflict was seen as a war against Arabs and Muslims.

When the Canadian government went to war against Iraq, many Canadians of Arab or Muslim background found that they were being identified with the enemy. On the street, in workplaces, in schools, and in the media they became targets of ignorance, hostility and paranoia. Many key institutions in Canadian society identified Arab and Muslim Canadians with the enemy government of Iraq. The media sought out individuals who criticized the government's decision to go to war with Iraq and treated them as extremists.

Even though government statements were made affirming the loyalties of citizens of Iraqi origins to their adopted countries in the West, populist discourses often blurred distinctions, making all Iraqis, Arabs and Muslims a common embodiment of the enemy.

Coming at the end of the Cold War when the justification of billion-dollar military budgets faced the risk of disappearing, the re-emergence of "Islam" as a pre-eminent threat to the North seems fortuitous for the armaments industry. Gwynne Dyer considers the economic value of presenting Muslims as the contemporary Other:

Reading between the lines in recent public discussion in the West, it is easy to discern a search for a new enemy. People feel rather lost without one - and besides, the military-industrial complex may wither on the vine if it doesn't find another plausible enemy pretty soon. So now that there is no Communist threat any more, maybe the Arabs or the Muslims can fill the role. The average taxpayer in Bavaria, Oxfordshire or Kansas ... makes no distinction between Syrians, Palestinians, Kuwaitis, Egyptians, etc. or, for that matter between "Arabs" and "Muslims," lumping
Turks, Arabs, Iranians and even Pakistanis as an indistinguishable mass.
It also helps that a minority of Muslim extremists spews self-righteous hatred and outrageous untruths about the West: an enemy has to act like an enemy. So maybe the "Muslims," properly manipulated, can be inflated into a threat that will frighten taxpayers into keeping defence budgets up where they belong. (The Toronto Star, 16/3/92: A17).

While Northern propagandists warn against the danger from despotic Muslim leaders such as Saddam Hussein, it does not seem to be in Northern interests actually to eliminate the perceived threat from "Islam"; such a move would remove the practical utility that the existence of the Other affords. Without the Saddam Husseins, Muammar Qadhafis and Abu Nidals there would be less reason to keep underwriting the technological upgrading of Northern military machines.

Joyce Nelson saw this rationale operating in the course of the war between the United Nations Coalition and Iraq:

Byron Callan, a stock analyst at Prudential-Bache Securities, told Associated Press that if Iraq were to be thoroughly defeated, "Saudi Arabia would lose its primary impetus for plans to double its armed forces. In addition, the long-term military threat to Israel might be reduced." Such an outcome would have been a disaster for business and helps us to understand the momentary tiff between Stormin' Norman Schwartzkopf and George Bush over the latter's refusal to let the former bomb Iraq to oblivion. No doubt, a quick briefing on economics helped Norman see the light. (1991: 22)

To destroy the government of Saddam Hussein and encourage the emergence of a democratic regime in Iraq would have proved counterproductive for Northern military-industrial complexes: the region had to remain unstable so that American
and other Northern weapons manufacturers could continue their lucrative business in the Middle East (see Hippler and Lueg, 1995).

A brief item in the September 12, 1992 issue of the *Ottawa Citizen* filed from St. Louis by an unidentified news service and headlined "Bush allows Saudis to buy fighter jets" read:

President George Bush told cheering U.S. defence workers Friday he is approving a job-saving sale of F-15 jet fighters to Saudi Arabia, saying it is "in the interests of world peace."

The $9-billion U.S. sale of fighters manufactured by contractor McDonnell Douglas is expected to save the jobs of 7,000 defence workers, the company said.

"We can and indeed must, for our own sake, go forward with this sale," Bush said. "I'm certain it is in the interests of world peace."

Nothing was said in the article about the profits that were to be made by McDonnell Douglas or about the contributions that the company might have made to George Bush's presidential re-election campaign. Decoded within dominant political discourse that applies "the logic of the concrete" (Tuchman, 1981: 90), the news brief could be read in the following manners: the primary impetus for buying the warjets came from the Saudis, it was in the interest of world peace for the Saudis to have the planes, and 7,000 jobs would be saved by the transaction. The secondary technological myths of the Nation, Work, and Happiness are put into service by integration propagandists to develop support for the sale of the fighter planes. Through the deal with the Saudis not only will security/happiness of the nation and the international system be guaranteed, but so will that of the workers who make these weapons - weapons which will not create violence but
"world peace." These lines of thinking help overcome the resistance to giving sophisticated armaments to a conservative Muslim government: even though the Saudis are seen as being regressive in their religious ways, they are a lesser evil than their fellow Muslims, especially Saddam Hussein and the Iranians. "Good Muslims" are those who are "moderate," "pragmatic," anti-communist, fight alongside us against our enemies, allow our multinationals to do business in their countries, provide "our" oil to us on favourable terms, and invest their money in our banks; "bad Muslims" are "extremists," "hard-liners," "fundamentalists," "violent," "terroristic," have communist friends, demand exorbitant prices for resources, support our enemies, hold demonstrations against us, take our citizens hostages, and fight against us (Said, 1981: 114).

Iran "the Great Satan"

Although the ideological need to run an active propaganda campaign against "Islam" was generally absent during the Cold War, the cultural memory of the intermittent conflict with the Muslim Other from the seventh to the nineteenth centuries remained latent in the North in a vast literary corpus. Old stereotypes of "Islam" continued to appear in Northern discourses and cultural productions, but did not seem to be organized into a coherent propagandic attack. In any case, Muslim countries lay largely defeated and colonized after a long, intermittent struggle with Europe, and their political elites were eagerly adopting Northern ways of thinking and acting (Sharabi, 1966). It was with the overthrow in 1979 of
the Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlevi and the assassination of Anwar Sadat, both staunch American allies, by the forces of "Islamic fundamentalism" that "Islam" re-emerged as a principal bogeyman. The forcible, non-apologetic reassertion of traditional Muslim symbols by the revolution in Iran and its overt opposition to dominant global discourses seem to have created the need for Northern integration propagandists to focus on "Islam." As the Iranian leadership decried the American government as the "Great Satan," American propagandists produced a similarly demonic picture of the "Islamic" government of Iran. In their reciprocal images, both the Americans and the Iranians had characteristics abhorred by the other - moral decadence and cultural imperialism, on the one side, and religious fanaticism and Oriental barbarism, on the other:

> the drama has unfolded as if according to an Orientalist program: the so-called Orientals acting the part decreed for them by what so-called Westerners expect; Westerners confirming their status in Oriental eyes as devils (Said, 1981: 52).

Iranian antipathy, while focused on the United States, extended to the entire North including the "godless" Soviet bloc; and American distaste for "Islamic fundamentalism" encompassed all its manifestations in other Muslim societies where Iran was seen "exporting" its revolution. Thus in the 1980s the struggle of "Islam versus the West" largely became exemplified in dominant international discourses, including Canadian ones, as that between Iran and America (Altheide, 1981).
The dividing line between Iran and the US increasingly coincided with that between "barbarism" and "civilization." Regardless of America's massive sales of military hardware and sponsorship of violent activity around the world (Chomsky, 1992; Falk, 1991b; Emerson, 1988), Iran's revolutionary brutality was portrayed by newspaper editorials as an illustration of "a cultural gap ... that is simply unbridgeable" and its war with Iraq over the control of a vital border waterway as "a holy war to which there are seemingly no rational limits." A Newsweek article titled "Coping with the Unfathomable" asked: "what can Western governments, and the U.S. in particular, do to cope with a radically unpredictable state like Iran?"

The Iranian government's domestic and external power struggles, which its own leaders dressed in "Islamic" garb, were rarely subjected to political or economic analyses. It appears that the "barbaric" and "irrational" behaviour seemed to agree so well with cognitive models about how "Muslim fanatics" were supposed to act that there seemed no need for the kind of explanations usually found necessary in rationalizing similar political conflicts in North America and Europe. In her study of American editorial coverage of the Iranian revolution, Jennifer Darling observes that journalists largely failed to make clear the historical role either of Shi'ism or of the Shi'ite ulama ("clergy"): 

There was, for example, no reference to Ithnä'ashari Shiism as a political ideology resistant to foreign domination and state tyranny, or the symbolic importance of Husayn [the prophet Muhammad's grandson] in the aspiration of social justice. The 'ulama' were not considered within their doctrinal context as deputies of the Imam,
with its attendant political implications, nor was there any reference to the 'ulama's close economic, social, and institutional ties with the community of believers. Hence, the reader is left to assume that Iranian 'ulama' are roughly equivalent to the Christian clergy, which makes the former's 'intrusion' into the political sphere more difficult to understand from our secularised perspective, or in a more damaging form, it confirms our suspicions about their 'medieval' religiosity. (1982: 176)

Without awareness of the cultural context in which the Iranian revolution was taking place, readers could only surmise that irrational and barbaric "Islamic" tendencies which had supposedly been eradicated by programs of modernization/Westernization\textsuperscript{22}, were once again rearing their heads in the form of "Shi'ite fundamentalism." The latter seemed to be a particularly virulent form of "Islam": a columnist declared in the \textit{Atlanta Journal-Constitution}, "Where there are Shi'ites, there is trouble."\textsuperscript{23}

Those who wanted to make a distinction between a "good Muslim" and a "bad Muslim" often used the frame of the "ancient Shi'ite-Sunni feud." In August 1987, along with a cover story on the Iran-Iraq war titled "Iran Vs. The World," \textit{Time} magazine had a backgrounder on confrontations between Shi'ites and Sunnis. Headlined "\textbf{The Unending Feud: Shi'ites vs. Sunnis}," the article implied that there had been continual fighting between the two branches of Muslims since the death of the prophet Muhammad 14 centuries ago. Sunnis were portrayed as engaging in "private meditative piety" and Shi'ites as being "more likely to indulge in displays of religious ardor" (17/8/87: 24). (Iraq, Kuwait and Bahrain were depicted as being destabilized by their Shi'ite minorities.) This remarkable bit of generalization, prompted by a combination of ignorance and ideological
motivation, attempted to create mass portraits of good and bad kinds of Muslims who were engaged in a millennial struggle manifested at that time in the Iran-Iraq War.

A feature article on Saudi Arabian politics by Jim Rogers published in *Worth Magazine*, and reprinted in *The Ottawa Citizen*, was also framed within the Shia-Sunni dichotomy. The *Citizen* highlighted this frame with this side-bar next to a picture of a pilgrimage scene at the Ka'ba in Mecca:

*Saudi Arabia is home to Mecca's Grand Mosque, right, one of Islam's holiest shrines. [...] For centuries Muslims have slaughtered one another in the name of Mohammed. Most Saudis are Sunni Muslims. The other main group is the Shi'ites* (6/1/96: B4).

These apparently unrelated sentences seemed to fulfil the function of linking one of the most significant communal rituals of the religion to strife among its adherents. In this, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*), viewed as a symbol of unity among the world-wide community of Muslims (*Ummah*), instead became an icon for the "ancient Shi'ite-Sunni feud."24

There has been a general tendency in dominant Northern discourses to attribute all manifestations of "Islamic fundamentalism" to the "Shi'ite peril." This perception has remained entrenched even after the publicity that has attended the insurgencies in countries like Algeria and Egypt where the militants are Sunnis. The cognitive model of Shi'ism manifesting "bad Islam" seems to have been so strong that when the Algerian Islamist party Front Islamique de Salut won the first
Illustration 11

Depicting conflict between Muslims.
The Unending Feud: Shiites vs. Sunnis

In the heart of the Islamic world, the Shiites and Sunnis battle each other. The Shiites believe that the first four caliphs of Islam were the successors of the Prophet Muhammad. The Sunnis believe that the caliphate passed to an elected leader after the Prophet's death. This dispute has led to centuries of conflict and violence.

Amal 'defeats' Shiites in S. Lebanon battle

Amal, a Shi'ite group, has been fighting with the Lebanese government and the Sunni-dominated Christian Phalange Party. The battle for Beirut is symbolic of the wider conflict between the two sects.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is home to Mecca's Grand Mosque, one of Islam's holiest shrines. For centuries, Muslims have gathered there to perform the hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca. The kingdom is also home to the headquarters of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the headquarters of the Shi'ite movement. The other main group is the Sunnis.

Moslem fights Moslem as Druze rout Beirut rivals

In Lebanon, Moslem-Sunni tension is a major factor in the conflict. The Druze, a religious minority, have been fighting the Sunnis and the Shiites in the north of the country. The Druze victory in Beirut is a significant development in the ongoing conflict.
stage of national elections in December 1991, a *Globe and Mail* editorial expounded: "the Sunni Islam practised in Algeria is a more moderate, less hierarchical form of Islam than the Shiite branch followed in Iran" (28/12/91: A18). The subsequent ferocity of Algerian Islamists has put such speculation to rest. An article on how "Muslim clerics preach tolerance in Central Asia" The *Globe and Mail*’s Moscow correspondent, Geoffrey York, wrote, "... the worries about Islamic fundamentalism have turned out to be grossly exaggerated. Most of the people in Central Asia are Sunni Muslims who have found no attraction in fundamentalism" (13/3/95). Once the demonic character of the "Shi‘ite peril" had been established, it was linked with all aspects of "bad Islam." Interestingly, even "bad Christianity" has been described as "Shi‘ite Christianity" in the language of American liberalism. Thus, having removed Shi‘ism from its historical and cultural contexts, Northern propagandists could turn it into a synonym for religious extremism in general and of "Islamic fundamentalism" in particular.

In the mid-eighties, as the Cold War was drawing to a close, there began a debate between those Northern integration propagandists who continued to couch all conflicts within the basic framework of the NATO-Warsaw Pact struggle and others who were beginning to see "Islam" as the new Other. This discussion among participants in dominant international discourses was reflected in the columns of two writers in *The Calgary Herald*, Horst Heise and Roy Farran, both of whom commented on the role of Iran in global politics in the August 11, 1987 issue of the newspaper. The former painted a sweeping geopolitical "worst
scenario" in which the Soviet Union would emerge triumphant over the Middle
East region and the West:

Moscow welcomed Khomeini's revolution because it ended Iran's
alliance with the U.S. But it is very concerned that the mullah's
fundamentalism could jump the border and infect its own Moslem
population. Therefore the Soviets' interest in keeping Iran's war
with Iraq going.

From this follows that a weak Iranian compromise government - in
which the communists or their fronts would play an important role
- would be the preferred outcome ...

Farther ahead, a mix of routine Soviet tactics applied to Iran, not
quite the Czechoslovakian example perhaps, could give Moscow
all it needs for exercising control over the region. No shots need be
fired, and the Arabian [sic] states likely would fall in line ...

It would endear Gorbachev to the Arabs who - while quite nervous
about Moscow's intent - value clever power politics and resent
Washington's preference of Israel over them.

In return for diplomatic ties Moscow could pose as the Arab states' protector against Khomeini's fundamentalist threat - in short
become the effective guardian in the Gulf; as well as of stable oil
prices! ...

Would Gorbachev not threaten to cut the flow of oil? I doubt it.
But he would strengthen his influence over Western Europe and
Japan, seeking the economic ties needed to obtain technology and
capital for the Soviet economy.

It will take very clever Western diplomacy to better Moscow's -
and the unpredictable Khomeini will make this tough to do.27

In this remarkable bit of Orientalist sophistry, reminiscent of the heyday of the
Cold War when the world was viewed as a red and blue checker-board, the

Muslim states' were presented as pushovers who were manipulated by "clever
power politics" of the "Evil Empire." The West was thus required to better this by
being "very clever" in order to win over the Arabs who "value clever power
politics" and would easily "fall in line" under a moderate amount of pressure; they
were also seeking a protector against the "unpredictable" Khomeini's infectious
"fundamentalist threat."

On the other hand, Farran, expressing the emerging Northern discourse on
the Muslim Other, argued that the West and the Eastern bloc should both view
Iran as a common threat in the post-Cold War era:

Within the Moslem faith, including its interface with Western
civilization, there are undercurrents as profound as in the days of
Mohammed himself. And it is a turmoil that has only passing
relationship to that other ideological [sic] conflict for world hearts
and minds between capitalists and communists.
The huge and expanding church is in conflict within itself between
Sunnis and Shias, between moderates and puritans, between
zealots and rationalists...
The world, including both America and Russia, must now face the
fact that Iran is a maverick. It sees itself as the lone defender of
moral principle against the devil as manifested through western
lifestyles, the State of Israel, the Iraqi government and many fellow
Moslems.
Whether the reign of the mad mullahs would come to an end with
the death of Khomeni is doubtful. But what is now very likely is
that the fanaticism would not subside if the Ayatollah's army were
victorious.
Bill Casey of the CIA and Admiral Poindexter of the security staff
in the White House were living in an earlier world where every war
was seen as part of the super-power struggle...
All the petty attempts by Democrats to discredit the outgoing
Republican president [Ronald Reagan] must take second place to
this, the biggest threat to world peace since Vietnam.²⁸

According to Farran, the Americans should stop fighting with the Soviets and the
Democrats with the Republicans, and all of them should recognize the real enemy:
Shi'ite Iran, which had brought back the global "turmoil" present "in the days of
Mohammed himself." Civilization itself was threatened with a fanatical and
medieval barbarism of a Muslim world "in conflict with itself." Thus the North
had to side with the "good Muslims" in Iraq (Sunni, moderate, rationalist) who were doing battle with the "bad Muslims" in Iran (Shi'ite, puritan, zealot) to defeat the "threat to world peace."

**Iraq as the "Islamic" Demon**

With Iran having been painted as the villain and Iraq as the hero/victim during the Iran-Iraq War (1980-88), it became easier for the United States government to justify armaments deliveries to the anti-Israeli, Soviet-supported dictatorship in Baghdad.

Saddam's fascist atrocities over the years and his 100,000 political prisoners were never allowed to disturb the geo-political machinations of successive US [and Soviet] administrations, not to mention their moral scruples, because he, his clan, the Ba'ath Party and the East-West trained security apparatus have killed enough democrats and socialists over the past 27 years and managed to keep the rebellious Iraqi people under control to qualify the Iraqi regime for a treatment ranging from active support to silent acquiescence. An acquiescence interlaced with covert support even when the Iraqi regime was seemingly an active ally of the Soviet Union. (Yousif, 1991: 59).

Even an Iraqi's warjet's attack in May 1987 on an American frigate (USS Stark) cruising in the Persian Gulf, killing 37 US sailors, and the chemical bombing by the Baghdad government of its Kurdish minority in March 1988, killing thousands of civilians (Mowlana, 1992: 31) - while creating temporary uproar - seemed not to raise the kind of outrage reserved for similar incidents by enemy governments.

In the 1980s, the mass media generally remained silent about the American support for Iraq, which was often portrayed as bravely defending the Persian Gulf
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kingdoms and emirates from the virulent influence of Iranian "Shi'ite fundamentalism" (ibid: 32-33). An article on Iran's ambitions of spreading its revolution in the region in the July 27, 1987 issue of Maclean's magazine emphasized the model of the Shia-Sunni conflict over the territorial nature of the war between Iran and Iraq-an approach which seems ironic in light of Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait:

Should Iraq ultimately lose the war the neighbouring Kuwaitis are clearly concerned that they would be next in line. The Sunni-ruled state has contributed millions of petrodollars to Iraq's war effort, making it a logical target for Iranian subversion.

Iraq was thus presented as the champion of the "moderate" Sunni kingdoms, although its "Islamic" characteristics were not detailed. The use of "Islamic" symbols by the Iraqi government (Lemon, 1986) and the adherence of Iraqis to "Islam" was generally underplayed by Northern mass media in that period, while similar tendencies by the Iranians were highlighted.

However, during the Gulf War, when Northern forces were arrayed against Iraq, the focus seemed to be on emphasizing the "Islamic" nature of the Iraqi regime and society. The religious posturing by Saddam Hussein (Abd al-Jabbar, 1991: 211) was given considerable coverage and cameras seemed to seek out his supporters who were in "Islamic" dress. Maclean's had a cover story titled "The Gulf War and Islam" at the height of the conflict in its February 11, 1991 issue. While there was some discussion of the Iraqi leader's exploitation of "Islamic" symbols, the focus was on the support for him by the "Muslim masses" in various
countries. Other publications also highlighted the perceived lack of rationality and
logic among those who supported Saddam Hussein, - this was blamed on "Islam"
and the Arab character. An article in the London-based Spectator stated:

The hatred of the West current in certain Arab circles, being
visceral rather than rational in nature, simply has to be accepted as
a way of life. (For the Arab masses the West is merely an
abstraction, which they ill understand except as an eternal
counterpoise to Islam.)

And another in Time:

Logic in the Arab world is often eclipsed by emotion. Saddam's
populist message against corrupt regimes kept in control by
American and Zionist powers, and the swagger of a leader who can
and will fight them, has had an intoxicating effect on the
dispossessed across national boundaries.

Such typifications that present Southerners as primarily ruled by emotion and
Northerners as calmly applying logic to deal with difficult situations are
characteristic of traditional Orientalist narratives.

In an analysis of American media coverage of the Gulf War, Parker L.
Payson notes how generalizations about Muslims and Arabs made up for the lack
of interviews with Iraqis themselves. Speculation about "the Muslim mind"
helped in creating an "us-versus-them attitude." He gives the following example:

Leon Katzen, writing in the Rochester-Gannet Papers, argues that
"Peace in the Middle East ... cannot be achieved until the people of
the West (including the Israelis) understand the Muslim mind,"
which, according to Katzen, is manipulated by clerics calling for
all Muslims to kill non-Muslims. (1991: 70)
Mashoed Bailie and David A. Frank provide a transcription of an on-camera conversation between NBC news anchor Tom Brokaw and "expert" Edward Peck during the Gulf war:

"Peck: I would tend to think that one of the things he [Saddam Hussein]’s going to do first, when he comes out of his bunker, is call on the Arab world to rise up and support him, and call on Muslims everywhere to do the same thing. I’m certain that Saddam Hussein can count on a very strong and very violent reaction from Muslims virtually everywhere.

Brokaw: And what are the prospects of that succeeding with the Arab masses, to say nothing of the other marginal leaders there?

Peck: I think it’s going to succeed very well, well fairly well. And that's not something that pleases me of course ... I think there's going to be a very strong emotional reaction on the part of all Arabs ... when they know the United States has struck co-religionists, co-Arabs, co-ethnists, if you will."

"Bunkers," "masses," "emotions," "Arabs rising": these words, taken together, portray the Orientalist position on the Middle East. Brokaw and Peck represent the war as a threat to America from "Arabs everywhere." Americans are not safe from any "co-religionist," "co-Arab," or "co-ethnist." By extension, to be a Muslim is to be a threat to the "Christian West." What of Christian Arabs or non-Arabic Muslim converts? These complexities cannot be dealt with by Orientalists; for them the Orient is not complex, it is a single whole that must be dominated and controlled. (1992: 84)

Even though a large proportion of Iraqi immigrants to Canada is Christian34, no mention was made of them in a third article in Maclean's issue on "The Gulf War and Islam" even though it dealt with the impact of the war on Canadians of Arab origins, nor generally in other mass media reportage.35 Also, in keeping with the portrayal of Iraq as an "Islamic" country, the mass media rarely alluded to the fact that the chief spokesperson and foreign minister of the Iraqi government, Tariq Aziz, was Christian. Dwelling on such details would have detracted from
exploiting traditional Northern hostility towards "Islam" in the construction of
Saddam Hussein's government as the demonic enemy. (This also conforms with
the general reticence of the Northern mass media on the existence of indigenous
Christians in the Middle East.)

The image of Iran as a fanatical, fundamentalist "Islamic" country
appeared to have merged with that of Iraq in the course of the Gulf War. This
seemed to be manifested verbally during the Gulf War in frequent slips of tongue
by broadcast journalists who said "Iran" when they meant to say "Iraq," and
"Iranians" when they meant Iraqis (Bailie and Frank, 1992: 77).

One television producer, indeed, is said to have ordered a
standardising of the house style: "we've got to decide if we're
calling it Iraq or Iran." (Simpson, 1992: 9)

The "good Muslim/bad Muslim" dichotomy, however, seemed to have been
overturned in referring to the Sunni Saddam Hussein and the Shi'ite population of
southern Iraq. Although the latter were abandoned by the United Nations
Coalition at the end of the Gulf War after being encouraged to rebel against the
Baghdad government, their status as victims of Saddam Hussein was temporarily
highlighted in the 1992 run-up to George Bush's campaign for re-election as
president. Having maintained the existence of Hussein as a necessary Other, the
American administration, along with its allies in Europe, could be seen heroically
coming to the rescue of the Iraqi Shi'ites. But integration propagandists were
careful to indicate that these Shi'ites, despite having ties to those in Iran, were
"seeking [a] greater role in [the Iraqi] government, not [a] separate state":
"They didn't want another Iran in the Middle East. None of us want another Iran in the Middle East."
The question becomes particularly important now that the United States and its allies are engaged in aerial intervention in the name of protecting Shiites in southern Iraq, where most of them live.

..."The Shiites do not want to separate because they feel they are the core of Iraq," said Graham Fuller, a Middle East analyst with the Rand Corp. "There is no question of Shiites separating or joining Iran."

The ease with which the dramaturgical role of the Shi‘ite could be transformed from that of the villain to that of the victim seems remarkable. Central to such manipulations are the ideological reasons that bring them about, which often have little relation to the actual situation of the people accorded these roles. The apparent purpose here was how to emphasize the stature of George Bush as a statesman, a key feature of his election campaign; once he had lost the election, the Iraqi Shi‘ites largely vanished from the attention of the mass media.

Another scenario drawn up by the above-mentioned article from Worth Magazine, which was reprinted in The Ottawa Citizen, saw a Shi‘ite-inspired rebellion in Saudi Arabia leading to global disaster:

Imagine the domino effect at work in the Middle East. Saudi Arabia is under siege, mass confusion reigns in the Western democracies, and so Iran and Iraq hurriedly kiss and make up. The U.S. policy of isolating them is already pushing them together. So if Iran and Iraq can pull the new Saudi Arabia to their side, then Kuwait is going to fall, and so will the United Arab Emirates. This powerful new oil cartel could renounce its debts to the evil West, causing the price of oil to shoot through the roof. With billions of dollars in loans suddenly becoming nonproductive, our banking system will be thrown into a state of bedlam.
Bank stocks will collapse, and nobody will know whether to buy oil stocks or to sell them. Automotive stocks worldwide will plummet. East and west, north and south, stock markets will close for days that stretch into weeks. (6/1/96: B4)

The language of popular economics is used to create images of a world-wide financial apocalypse. Cold War logic also plays a role in the construction of Muslim "oil states" falling like dominos. The appeal of such scenarios, which are frequently reprinted and rebroadcasted by the mass media, lies in the confirmation they provide for cognitive models about how Muslims act.

Images of "Islam" and Muslims are thus manipulated almost at will by Northern propagandists, who wield tremendous discursive power in international communication. The mostly negative cognitive models about Muslims, their religion and their relationships with the North are used to produce these cultural constructions. The "Islamicness" of countries - often used to demonize them - is either emphasized or de-emphasized according to current needs of Northern propagandists. Similarly, the term "Shi'ite" has come to be the equivalent of "Islamic fundamentalist," except when qualified otherwise. The general lack of awareness among Northern and other non-Muslim Southern audiences about 14 centuries of Muslim history, during most of which the Twelver sect of Shi'ites has remained quiescent, permits its portrayal as being endemically militant. This form of depiction is carried out through the de-contextualization and de-historicization of current events in Muslim societies. The Gulf War became the occasion for intense and massive distortion of the real reasons for which the confrontation took
place and the manners in which it was carried out. Propagandists could call on a
range of negative stereotypes of the Muslim Other developed over centuries, and
still extant in the collective Eurocentric memory. As the millennial conflict with
"Islam" resumed once again it was as if the Cold War had just been a brief
interlude.

Notes
1. For other views of the Gulf War as a conflict between the North and the South, see Amin (1992)
and Frank (1992).

2. For a review of some of the statements made by Western integration propagandists on this subject,
see Hashemi (1994).

3. Ironically, it is not only Northern integration propagandists who have constructed the conflict
between the North and the "Islam," but Islamists as well. In fact, Sayyid Qutb of the Muslim Brethren,
who was executed by the Egyptian government in 1966, wrote that the division between the capitalist
West and the communist East was superficial and that the real "struggle [was] between Islam and both
the blocs" (Ayoub, 1989: 44).

4. For a discussion on an "Islamic mode of production," see Mazrui (1990: 67-82); also see Rodinson

5. Barbara Amiel, "At odds with Arabs," The Ottawa Sun (15/8/90), 11. (Amiel is an exceptionally
well-placed Northern integration propagandist: married to international media tycoon Conrad Black,
she writes for The Times of London, Maclean's, and the Sun newspaper chain in Canada apart from
appearing as an "expert" on broadcast talk shows and lecture circuits on both sides of the Atlantic. Her
husband, Conrad Black, wholly controls through Hollinger Incorporated, the Jerusalem Post, the
Chicago Sun-Times, the London Telegraph, the Saskatoon Star-Phoenix and the Regina Leader-Post
and 474 other "non-dailies" as well as 19 per cent of the Southam newspaper chain in Canada which
owns 17 Canadian papers (The Ottawa Citizen, 6/1/96: E2.) We also find the same line of logic in
Benjamin Netanyahu's portrayal of "collaboration between marxist and Muslim radicals" (1986: 11-
13).

6. President Bill Clinton disavowed Huntington's view of the "clash of civilizations" in public speeches
in Muslim countries (Economist, 26/8/95: 25-26). However, his policy on "Islamic fundamentalism"
appears confused and contradictory: it supports the Saudi Arabian government which is traditionalist
in its institution of the Muslim Shariah but it is bitterly opposed to the religious approach of the
Muslim government of Iran.

7. The context in which dominant Northern discourses blend "Islam" and communism sometimes falls
outside geopolitics; for example, an editorial by Jean-Robert Sansfaçon in Le Devoir on the
authoritarian stance on women's issues in Muslim states and China had the headline: "Entre l'islam et
8. For example, an episode of the drama series JAG, broadcast on March 23, 1996 on the Global Television Network, had the governments of Iran and Cuba conspire together against American interests.

9. "In True Lies [a Hollywood movie], Crimson Jihad is the name of an Arab terrorist organization which is planning to launch a nuclear attack on the United States from within. The terrorists have obtained four nuclear war heads from the former Soviet Republic of Kazakhstan" (Anis, 1996: 29)


11. Interestingly, a Globe and Mail editorial criticized Claes's comments, cautioning against stereotypically seeing "Muslims as hard-eyed fanatics lobbing bombs at the cathedrals of capitalism" (6/2/95: A20). The newspaper even occasionally printed articles that sought to analyze "Islam" through alternative discourses, for example, Peter Waldman, The Wall Street Journal, "Reformers crusade to modernize Islam" (16/3/95). However, its own correspondent, Patrick Martin, produced a serial "survey of modern Islam" that was packed with fearful images of "Islam's battle with the existing world order"; see his "Death holds no fear for Muslim militants" (12/5/95: A8), "Islamic challenge fierce in Africa" (15/5/95: A8), and "The empire strikes back: Islam's threat to Turkey" (23/5/95: A10).


16. In a slip of the tongue during a television interview, British prime minister John Major referred to the actions "the West" was taking against Saddam Hussein before quickly catching himself and replacing the term with "the world community" - which itself is a euphemism for the consensus often induced in their favour by Northern powers at institutions such as the UN Security Council. See Huntington (1993: 39-40).


18. A similar approach was taken in explaining why Americans were supplying arms to Iraq during its war with Iran in the 1980s: Elaine Sciolino, New York Times news service, "Iraq pushed into making up to U.S.," The Montreal Gazette (9/2/84: B6).


22. Cf. Hisham Sharabi wrote in 1966 that "in the contemporary Arab world Islam has been simply bypassed" (26). Also see Donald Eugene Smith (1970).


24. Another side-bar that also functioned as a caption for a photograph in the full-page (broadsheet) article stated, "Despite his current health problems, King Fahd, left, sits atop the world's largest family business, one that must now figure out how to divide a shrinking pie. Yet it is a business in disarray. The man is known to be terminally lazy and he is widely recognized as a drunk, a womanizer, a gambler and a man greedy for yet more billions." Together with the other prominent side-bar, the newspaper seemed to reproduce the four Northern topos about "Islam": violence, lust, greed and barbarism.

25. Also see David Hirst, The Guardian, "Time Bomb in Persian Gulf; Kuwaitis fear Shiite 'peril' in their midst," The Toronto Star (21/6/87: H1, H2). Information on "Islam" on-line computer networks such as the World Wide Web posted by mainstream institutions predictably borrows from dominant discourses: the opening sentence of an account on "Algeria SOCIAL CONDITIONS" by IBC USA in 1994 stated, "Although 99% of Algerians are Sunni Muslims, the major source of social tension is the strong and increasingly radical Islamic fundamentalist movement ..." (http://wn.apc.org/mediateehlpolrisk/ALGEOOO6.HTM). However, as opposed to the mass media, which are controlled by specific interests, it is possible for a broad variety of discourses to be present on such computer networks.


28. Roy Farran, "We can't understand Middle East conflict until we realize the force of religious ideas," The Calgary Herald (11/8/87: A8).

29. "In 1987, an Iraqi plane mistakenly attacked the USS Stark, and President Reagan warned Iran that any repetition would be severely dealt with. No one seemed to notice that he was warning the wrong country" (Simpson, 1992: 9). Similarly, the June 1967 destruction by Israeli forces of an American navy reconnaissance ship, the USS Liberty, during the Six-Day War, causing the death of 34 American sailors, was also overlooked; see Findley (1985: 165-79).


31. Cf. James Deacon, "The Will to Fight - and Die: Hussein Calls for a Holy War," Maclean's (11/2/91: 39); D'Arcy Jenish, Islam and the Gulf War: Why many Moslems Support Iraq," Maclean's (11/2/91), 34-37; Stephen Vizinczey, "Bring on the Israelis," The Globe and Mail (31/1/91); The Independent news service, "Asians line up to fight for Iraq," The Ottawa Citizen (23/1/91); Peter Bakogil, Southam News, "Attack feeds Muslim anger," The Ottawa Citizen (251/91: A2); and Judith Miller, New York Times news service, "Inside Saddam's Head: A messianic streak and a touch of history characterize Iraqi leader's conduct," The Ottawa Citizen (22/2/91: A2). To its credit, near the end of the war Time published a short article by Richard N. Ostling on "Islam's ideas of 'Holy War'" (11/2/91: 51) which briefly attempted to compare the concept to "just war" and to explore its history as well as its exploitation by various Muslim leaders; however, as in other examples of alternative discourses, it was lost in the barrage of material that emphasized the "Islamicness" of Saddam
Hussein's actions.


34. This information was obtained from Austin Cooke of the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship. According to data from the 1991 Canadian national census, of the Canadian population with Arab origins, 57.1% adhered to various Christian denominations and 39.9% was Muslim (Anis, 1996: 15).


Chapter 12

Civilization Versus Barbarism
Giving Shape to the New World Order

This chapter demonstrates the ways in which Gulf War became an occasion for the Northern propagandists to develop scenarios in which the North was engaged in a global conflict against "Islam." Several confrontations between Northern and Muslim groups have been culturally constructed within this cognitive model: various hijackings of American and European airliners by Middle Eastern terrorist groups, the hostage-taking in Iran of American embassy staff, the kidnappings Westerners in Beirut, "the Rushdie affair," "the foulard affair" in France, the confrontations between Israel and Islamist Palestinian organizations; even the internal conflicts between Islamist groups and domestic governments in various countries with Muslim majorities are often cast as battles between "Islamic" and Northern values. However, it was the war between the United Nations Coalition and Iraq in 1991 that seemed to have prompted an intensive effort by Western integration propagandists to create the image of two irreconcilable foes engaging in a major episode of their millennial struggle. As discussed in Chapter 11, the previous role of Saddam Hussein as an ally of the West in its conflict with Iran was abandoned with remarkable ease by integration propagandists. He was recast in the part of the archetypal "Muslim despot" - whereas his government's ruthless acts against its own citizens had been largely overlooked, its every transgression was highlighted by the Western-based international media during the Gulf War.
Apart from the continual barrage in the daily media, the conflict was the subject of longer "think pieces" in American magazines published in the period between Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 and the end of the Gulf War in February 1991. They constructed a picture in which "Islam" and the West were separated by fundamental differences. Four influential Northern ideologues, Bernard Lewis, Daniel Pipes, V.S. Naipaul, and William Pfaff, respectively, published such write-ups in The Atlantic, the National Review, the New York Review of Books, and the New Yorker. Although these four periodicals are widely available across North America they do not have as large circulations as large as Time and Newsweek or Maclean's in Canada, but their readerships would seem to include journalists who reproduce the same ideological model in their own writing. Even while criticizing the general mass media coverage of the Gulf War in a Globe and Mail column, Ray Conlogue stated:

The thoughtful American journals, fortunately, have been analyzing the racism and historical contempt for Islam that lies behind this campaign. William Pfaff's admirable Reflections: Islam and the West in the Jan. 28 issue of New Yorker, together with Bernard Lewis's The Roots of Muslim Rage in the September issue of Atlantic magazine are among the best.¹

D'Arcy Jenish also referred to Bernard Lewis's article in the Maclean's cover story on "Islam and the Gulf War" (11/2/92: 37). The four writers of the longer essays, whose own distortions of "Islam" remained invisible to these journalists, are considered "experts" on the subject and are frequently quoted by the mass media.
The appearance of think pieces about "Islam" in high-profile periodicals usually occurs during critical events in Muslim societies, notes Edward Said. They allow "experts" to make far-reaching generalizations about Muslims:

Academic experts on Islam in the West today tend to know about jurisprudential [sic] schools in tenth-century Baghdad or nineteenth-century Moroccan urban patterns, but never (or almost never) about the whole civilization of Islam - literature, law, politics, history, sociology, and so on. This has not prevented experts from generalizing from time to time about the "Islamic mind-set" or the "Shi'a penchant for martyrdom," but such pronouncements have been confined to popular journals or to the media, which solicited these opinions in the first place. More significantly, the occasions for public discussions of Islam, by experts and nonexperts, have almost always been provided by political crises. It is extremely rare to see informative articles on Islamic culture in the *New York Review of Books*, say, or in *Harper's*. Only when the stability of Saudi Arabia or Iran has been in question has "Islam" seemed worthy of general comment. (Said, 1981: 14)

Although none of the above-mentioned four articles specifically presented Saddam Hussein's regime as part of the "Muslim fundamentalist movement," all framed relations between Northern and Muslim civilizations as essentially conflictual. Whereas other incidents such as "the Rushdie affair" had also precipitated similar constructions, integration propagandists seemed compelled to develop a grander ideological scenario in order to justify the marshalling of overwhelming military might against one small country.

Published in the month following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, Bernard Lewis's "The Roots of Muslim Rage" was a cover story in *The Atlantic* (Sept. 1990: 47-60). Apparently stung by previous criticism of his Orientalist tendencies
(Said, 1978; 1981), he seemed careful in couching his write-up within prefatory remarks that lauded the historical contributions of "Islam" and specified that the "Muslim world is far from unanimous in its rejection of the West" (1990: 48). However, within the context of the entire article this sounded very much like - to rephrase Shakespeare - "I come not to bury Islam but to praise it." The cover page of the magazine had a drawing styled in the manner of the official portraits of Ottoman sultans; but the bearded man in the turban scowled fiercely and in each eye had the image of an American flag - the object of his "Muslim rage." In what seemed to be an explanation for the Iranian leadership's characterization of America as "the Great Satan" and Saddam Hussein's call for jihad, Lewis expounded:

In Islam the struggle of good and evil very soon acquired political and even military dimensions ... If the fighters in the war for Islam, the holy war "in the path of God," are fighting for God, it follows that their opponents are fighting against God. (49)

The Orientalist scholar then went on to place the contemporary conflict within the "millennial" struggle between "Christendom" and "Islam" (without bothering to deal with the awkward questions of why Saddam Hussein had followed a rigorous program of modernization, created protective measures for Christian and Jewish minorities, and persecuted "Islamic fundamentalists" in Iraq):

The struggle between the two rival systems has now lasted for some fourteen centuries. It began with the advent of Islam, in the seventh century, and has continued virtually to the present day. It
has consisted of a long series of attacks and counterattacks, jihads and crusades, conquests and reconquests ... For the past three hundred years, since the failure of the second Turkish siege of Vienna in 1683 and the rise of the European colonial empires in Asia and Africa, Islam has been on the defensive, and the Christian and post-Christian civilization of Europe and her daughters has brought the whole world, including Islam, within its orbit. (49)

Centuries of history were collapsed together to support the notion that "the two rival systems" have been fighting the same war "for some fourteen centuries."

Having painted the backdrop of the millennial conflict, he plunged directly into the business of why the undifferentiated, stereotypical "Muslim" was enraged at contemporary Christendom.

The Muslim has suffered successive stages of defeat. The first was his loss of domination in the world, to the advancing power of Russia and the West. The second was the undermining of his authority in his own country, through an invasion of foreign ideas and laws and ways of life and sometimes even foreign rulers and settlers, and the enfranchisement of native non-Muslim elements. The third - the last straw - was the challenge to his mastery in his own house, from emancipated women and rebellious children. It was too much to endure, and the outbreak of rage against these alien, infidel, and incomprehensible forces that had subverted his dominance, disrupted his society and finally violated the sanctuary of his home was inevitable. It was also natural that this rage should be directed primarily against the millennial enemy and should draw its strength from ancient beliefs and loyalties. (Ibid.)

Nothing was said about the destruction of indigenous economic infrastructures and the continuing control of the economies of Muslim societies by Northern powers (Amin, 1992). According to Lewis, even though the Muslim lived in the twentieth century, he had medieval sensibilities and hatreds: while his injury at being defeated and colonized is acceptable, his perceived rage at the supposed
emancipation of his women and children was not. Thus, within the dramaturgy of the larger, millennial struggle offered by this Orientalist, our heroic invasion and bombing of the Iraqi villain's territory could be justified in the interests of safeguarding the human rights of his female and infant victims. The mass media's focus on Saddam Hussein effectively made him the personification of the country: we were therefore attacking the demonic "Saddam" not Iraq or its civilian population. The Iraqi leader was made out to be "another Hitler" by Northern integration propagandists: in his article, Lewis included influences of Nazism and Soviet Marxism as those that had nurtured Muslim antipathy towards the modern West (1990: 52).

Lewis wrote further that Muslims were not upset about imperialism per se, in which Northern powers were "merely following the common practice of mankind through the millennia of recorded history," but were incensed with the colonization of Muslims by "infidels":

This may help us to understand the current troubles in such diverse places as Ethiopian Eritrea, Indian Kashmir, Chinese Sinkiang, and Yugoslavian Kosovo, in all of which Muslim populations are ruled by non-Muslim governments. (54)

The particularity of political, economic and historical causes of rebellions against central governments by peoples who happened to be Muslim were negated because all followers of "Islam" were always motivated by medieval religious impulses. (Lewis said nothing about the involvement of Christian Eritreans in the war against the Ethiopian government, nor about the role of churches in political
and military movements in places such as Poland, the Baltic republics, and Latin America.) This is an example of how such themes, which commonly appear in journalistic coverage of Muslim societies, are developed by academic Orientalists.

According to Lewis, it was not in anti-colonialism, anti-Zionism, Nazism, or Marxism in which "the roots of Muslim rage" against the North were to be found. The real source was the fear of Western capitalism and democracy "which provide an authentic and attractive alternative to traditional ways of thought and life" (56). Unlike Fatima Mernissi, who attempts to carry out an historical and social psychological inquiry about the ambivalence of the political elites of Muslim countries towards democracy, on the one hand, and the democratic aspirations of the citizens, on the other (1992: 42-59), Lewis painted a picture of Muslims having cultures completely antithetical to those of the North. He did this just as Western governments prepared to go to war with Iraq, thus providing ideological support for their military actions against the developing, albeit heavily armed, country:

It should by now be clear that we are facing a mood and a movement far transcending the level of issues and policies and the governments that pursue them. This is no less than a clash of civilizations - the perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the worldwide expansion of both. (60)

This was not just a military conflict but one of historical, even apocalyptic proportions: "a clash of civilizations," "our Judeo-Christian heritage" against
"Islam" - good versus evil. The thrust of the message was that we had to support the war against Iraq because this was a challenge to our heritage and to our future.

Another Orientalist, Daniel Pipes, who also frequently appears as an "expert" on "Islam" in the mass media, published the lead article titled "The Muslims are Coming! The Muslims are Coming!" in the November 19, 1990 issue of the bi-weekly National Review. The heading seemed to allude to the well-known alarm raised by Paul Revere during the American Revolutionary War: "The British are coming! The British are coming!" On the cover of the magazine was a photograph of a group of men in traditional Arab garments riding camels full gallop directly at the camera; a promotional card attached to the magazine under the title of the article read, "MANY WESTERNERS FEEL MORE THREATENED BY THEIR MUSLIM IMMIGRANT NEIGHBOURS THAN BY SADDAM HUSSEIN." The focus here shifted towards Muslims living in Northern countries, who were presented as a fifth column in the global struggle between "Islam" and the "West."

All immigrants bring exotic customs and attitudes, but Muslim customs are more troublesome than most. Also, Muslims appear most resistant to assimilation. Elements among the Pakistanis in Britain, Algerians in France, and Turks in Germany seek to turn the host into an Islamic society by compelling it to adapt their way of life. (Pipes, 1990: 30)

What effect such constructions of immigrant Muslim communities may have had during the war against Iraq is difficult to assess accurately; however, there were numerous reports of attacks, ranging from verbal abuse to destruction of property
and physical assaults, against people of Arab and Muslim backgrounds in Northern countries.³

Pipes placed Muslims living in Northern countries within the context of a worldwide struggle between the two civilizations. Although he stated that Muslims could not be seen as the "paramount enemy" and that only "dyed-in-the-wool fundamentalists" hated the West (29), he went on to paint a portrait of a fearsome threat from Muslim societies. Writing within the dominant discourses on international relations and terrorism, he constructed an image of Muslims as being very different from Northerners. In this scenario, the Iraqi regime with whom Northern powers were readying to go to war, was presented as a "Muslim government":

Today, many Muslim governments dispose of large arsenals; the Iraqi army, for example, has more tanks than does the German, and the nuclear missiles banned from Europe by the Intermediate Nuclear Force treaty can be found in the Middle East. Middle Eastern states have turned to terrorism into a tool of statecraft. About a dozen Muslim states have chemical and biological war capabilities. Impressive capacities to manufacture a wide range of matériel have been established in Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, and Indonesia. Before long, several of these states are likely to deploy atomic bombs.

... Muslim countries have the most terrorists and the fewest democracies in the world. Only Turkey (and sometimes Pakistan) is fully democratic, and even there the system is frail. Everywhere else, the head of the government got to power through force - his own or someone else's. The result is endemic instability plus a great deal of aggression. (29)

Pipes did not discuss the role of Northern powers in sustaining aggressive capabilities and instability in Muslim and other countries around the world, nor
did he touch upon the proliferation of armaments in states such as Israel, India or Brazil - to say nothing of Northern ones. (His oblique reference to the presence of nuclear missiles in "the Middle East" seems to have studiously avoided mentioning Israel, the only country known to have nuclear weapons in the region.) Only the acquisitiveness of the governments of Muslim governments in obtaining the tools of violence is highlighted. Another characteristic which differentiates Muslim societies from Northern ones is their fertility: "In contrast to Westerners, who are not able even to maintain their present numbers ... Muslims revel in some of the most robust birth rates in the world" (30). Related to the basic Northern stereotype of Muslims, that of lust, the Orientalist succeeded in linking two other topoi about "Islam," those of violence and greed, in constructing a present-day threat to the well-being of the North.

What strategies should the North adopt in the face of such alarming developments? Pipes surveyed various "imaginative" and "provocative" proposals regarding the response Northern states should take in face of the peril from Muslim societies. He constructed a scenario of a world war, pitting industrial democracies/Christendom against an international "fundamentalist Islamic wedge":

Some say the key is building cooperation among Western states. On the mundane level, industrial democracies should band together and preserve the liberal traditions of freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and the like; and they should cooperate against terrorism and other acts of violence. NATO should be extended outside the European theater. SDI [Strategic Defence Initiative, i.e. "Star
Wars] should be developed for use against Iraqi or Libyan missiles.

More imaginative are those who would reach out to the Christian portions of the Soviet empire as an ally against the Muslims. As the three Slavic republics, the three Baltic republics, and Moldavia, Georgia, and Armenia return to their historic allegiances, they can extend the reach of Europe eastward. The more provocative notion involves building a military alliance with these peoples, especially the Russians. The London Sunday Times calls on the West and the Soviet Union jointly to "prepare for the prospect of an enormous and fundamentalist Islamic wedge" stretching from Morocco to China. William Lind has suggested that "Russia's role as part of the West takes on special importance in the light of potential Islamic revival ... The Soviet Union holds the West's right flank, stretching from the Black Sea to Vladivostock." Walter McDougall, the Pulitzer prize-winning historian, sees Russia holding the frontier of Christendom against its common enemy. Should the Russian empire in Central Asia threaten to collapse, a full-scale religious war fought with nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons is not impossible. The Iraqis and Irans [sic] have already proven themselves capable of it, and the desperate and frustrated Russians certainly possess the means. Even more than Israel/Palestine, the old caravan routes may contain the site of the next Sarajevo.

What is one to make of these ideas? To begin with, they are a great improvement over the supine policies that many Western states, especially European ones, have adopted in recent years. It is better to exaggerate the danger of Libyan thuggery than to lick Qaddafi's boots - as too many Westerners have done since the oil boom of 1973-74. (29)

Secular governments in countries such as Iraq and those in Central Asia became "Muslim" and those in Western Europe and the former Soviet Union became "Christian" in these constructions of the new post-Cold War international order. "Star Wars" missiles targeted at each other by NATO and the Warsaw Pact could
be re-aimed southwards against the Muslim hordes. One can visualize the frenzied rearming of "Christian" and "Muslim" governments and minorities by the Northern military-industrial complexes, which would gleefully respond to this global re-alignment of loyalties.

In its January 31, 1991 issue, the New York Review of Books published an address by V.S. Naipaul given to the Manhattan Institute in New York as Northern states were preparing to attack Iraq. An acclaimed writer who lives in London, Naipaul was born in Trinidad and is of South Asian ancestry.

In his novels Guerillas and A Bend in the River ... Islam is in question, and it is part of Naipaul's general (and with liberal Western readers, popular) indictment of the Third World that he lumps together the corrupt viciousness of a few grotesque rulers, the end of European colonialism, and postcolonial efforts at rebuilding native societies as instances of an over-all intellectual failure in Africa and Asia. "Islam" plays a major part according to Naipaul, whether it is in the use of Islamic surnames by pathetic West Indian guerrillas, or in the vestiges of the African slave trade. For Naipaul and his readers, "Islam" somehow is made to cover everything that one most disapproves of from the standpoint of civilized, and Western, rationality. (Said, 1981: 7)

In 1981 he published Among the Believers: An Islamic Journey, a political travelogue that resulted from his whirlwind tour of Iran, Pakistan and Malaysia. It was in writing this book that Naipaul "formulated the idea of universal civilization" (1991: 23), on which he based his remarks to the Manhattan Institute. However, his "universal civilization" did not include Muslim societies; instead in the latter,

the faith was the complete way, filled everything, left no spare corner of the mind or will or soul, (compared) to the other world
where it was necessary to be an individual and responsible; where people developed vocations, and were stirred by ambition and achievement, and believed in perfectibility. (25)

This manichean scheme, in which he contrasted the light of the "universal civilization" with the darkness of "Islam," was presented as a response to a senior fellow of the institute who had asked him to address, among other issues, "Why is Islam held in opposition to Western values?" (25). In Naipaul's view, all believing Muslims effaced their respective individualities, shunned responsibility, did not develop vocations, lacked ambition, abstained from achievement, and refused to believe in human perfectibility. He constructed a bi-polar world based on the technological myths of Work and Happiness as well as on the archetypal image of Muslims as slothful people. This construct ideologically supported the emerging notion of a new global conflict between Northern civilization and "Islam" at the particular time when the North was going to war against an "Islamic" country.

This highly skilled propagandist was able to weave into his narrative the historical place of Iraq in "a terrible story of plunder and killing ... [written in the] Arab or Muslim imperial genre" (24). The story was from a thirteenth-century Persian account of the eighth-century Arab conquest of the Hindu kingdom of Sindh, located in what is now Pakistan. Naipaul expressed astonishment at the adulation of contemporary (Muslim) Sindhis for the Arab conquerors of their ancestors. This was used to illustrate how the "doubly-colonized" non-Arab Muslims
had been stripped by their [Muslim] faith of all that expanding intellectual life, all the varied life of the mind and the senses, the expanding cultural and historical knowledge of the world ... (24)

His presentation attempted to demonstrate the mind-numbing servility that he perceived among Muslims in Iran, Pakistan and Malaysia, who were beholden to an alien Arab religion. Naipaul depicted the adherence to "Islam" as a far worse colonization than that by European powers. The implication here was that it was the duty of the bearers of "the universal civilization" to liberate non-Arab Muslims from "Islamic" ideas, which "in the end [will] blow away" (25). In this way he deftly managed to link current events in the contemporary state of Iraq, in the guise of the global Other, to the origins of regressive "Islam." Yet, he assured his audience (with a coyness that seems excessive) that "The topicality is fortuitous, I assure you" (24).

Naipaul's message was: we can militarily "blow away" the "Muslim" regime in Iraq now just as the intellectual strength of our "universal civilization" will eventually eradicate "Islam" from the world. This seems well attuned with the myth of Science, according to which, modern technology will eradicate poverty, disease, and ignorance. The liberal American admirers of this "third worlder" could not but be gratified for his act of soothing their consciences in providing ideological justifications for going to full-scale war with a developing country, a decade and a half after the disaster in Vietnam. As if to give weight to the impression that Muslims and Iraqis were naturally prone to violence, the magazine illustrated the article with two medieval miniature Persian paintings
depicting acts of physical violence. On the other hand, Naipaul found the "the Christian precept, Do unto others as you would have others do unto you" to be one of the bases of the "universal civilization." Therefore, whereas "Islam" and even his own ancestral Hinduism were cast away as entirely unfit for the modern age, he presented aspects of Christianity as still relevant. This was akin to Lewis's linking of contemporary Western civilization to "our Judeo-Christian heritage."

William Pfaff's "Reflections" on "Islam and the West" appeared in the *New Yorker* in the same week as Naipaul's *New York Review of Books* article. Like the former, the syndicated, Paris-based American columnist on international affairs, argued that it was "Islam" that was holding Muslims back from integrating into the modernity. Exhibiting an understanding of Muslim history that was a little broader than Naipaul's, Pfaff, however, often appeared contradictory - listing the scientific achievements of Muslim civilization while at the same time portraying it as being intellectually "fixed." He stereotypically characterized "Islam" as "a religion of nomads," thus disregarding the fact that the prophet Muhammad himself was a city-dweller as well as the complexity of urban Muslim cultures.

The scientific and technological failure of Islamic civilization reflects the fact that nomadic technology, on the whole, is fixed; it lacks a capacity for development because, except in the military sphere, it has no need for it. The Christian world of the Middle ages was urban, agricultural, and maritime. These qualities created technological demands and therefore compelled technological evolution. Yet the science and the mathematics of medieval Arabia [sic] were more advanced than Europe's. (1991: 87)
Like Lewis and Naipaul, who found value in the North's religious heritage, Pfaff saw the source of modern Northern civilization in Christianity. On the one hand, he insisted that "Islam" was responsible for the Muslim failure to modernize, and on the other, he located the roots of Northern technological progress in the Bible and in the intellectual endeavours of Christian theologians such as Thomas Aquinas (86-87). Pfaff built his image of two essentially different worlds by emphasizing what he viewed as "the inability of Islamic civilization to respond to historical change" (85) and the "absence of speculative theology" in "Islam" (86) in contrast to the "culturally and economically aggressive modern West" (85).

Pfaff wrote that the failure of contemporary Muslim states was due to their reluctance to embrace wholeheartedly Western ideologies and Western ways of life. Attempts at seeking a "synthesis of civilizations" were "likely to lack authenticity" since "Islam" did not have the intellectual tools to develop a practical program "for ordinary people in an integrally religious society" (87). The only option that remained therefore was the complete Muslim surrender to Western ideas, which presumably would provide the means for such people to become authentically modern. Even as he weakly argued against Northern intervention in Iraq, he pointed out that the real war was ideological and a long-term one.

What has happened in Iraq, and happened before that in Iran, and the terrible traumas that have been produced by the struggle between the Palestinians and the Israelis all arise from the provisional defeat of a people and a religion by a rival, yet related, civilization. This is what the crisis in the Middle East is fundamentally about. The grievances (and grief) of modern Islam, its paranoia and defiance come from that. It follows that the present
conflict cannot settle anything worth settling, except who controls certain oil sources and who rules a given country. These may be matters that require settling, but they should be understood as the relatively small matters they are, and such settlements as they produce should be understood as assuredly insecure ones, productive of further chains of consequence which are very likely to leave all those involved worse off than they are now.

... The proposition that a victory over Iraq will constructively change the relations between the Islamic states and the West ignores the sources and the nature of their differences, which will endure long after Saddam Hussein - and George Bush - have quit the mortal scene. (88)

With this conclusion Pfaff set the stage for another millennial struggle between "Islam" (inclusive of Iraqi, Palestinian and other Middle Eastern Christians) and Northern Christendom, which had been briefly diverted by the fratricidal Cold War.

These four articles are examples of how the war with Iraq became an opportunity for Northern ideologues to develop the script of a global conflict of historical proportions between the North and "Islam." The attention created among the public by the Gulf War enabled integration propagandists such as these to put forward elaborate schemes that provided cultural and moral frameworks for going to war against a country with a Muslim majority. Their essays, which attempted to paint the bigger picture, could dwell on the "roots," "fundamentals," and "universals" of the millennial conflict between an essentially irreconcilable pair of antagonists, and provided the framework for the media reports on the war. With the decline of the atheist Soviet Union, Northern propagandists could once again talk about a Christendom in conflict with Muslims all over the world.
including Central Asia. The re-creation of the Muslim Other was not difficult to achieve since the memory of the long struggle between Christian Europe and the Muslim East could be invoked by using cognitive models extant even in the secular North's literary and artistic lore. Additionally, the intermittent conflicts of Northern powers with countries with Muslim populations could also be portrayed as belonging to the same age-old struggle. While the Orientalist Other includes the "yellow peril" from the Far East (witness the occasional bouts of "Japan bashing" by North American and European ideologues) and other threatening images derived from Asia, Africa and Latin America, the most persistent presentation of danger has been focused on "Islam." The exploitation of "Islamic" symbols by secularist leaders of Muslim states in their anti-Northern rhetoric facilitates the task of the Northern propagandists. Thus, what has been readily emerging is the image of a (post-)Christian North re-engaging in its millennial confrontation with "Islam."

A Global Media Narrative

Whereas the major news networks had glossed over Saddam Hussein's brutal repression of sections of the Iraqi population during the period when Western powers supported his government in its conflict with Iran, mainstream journalists covering the Gulf War vied with each other to uncover its slightest misdemeanour. The mass media reportage of the Gulf War manifested "a global narrative" that adhered to the cultural and ideological assumptions of dominant
international discourses. This is confirmed by the findings of a large number of studies about the reportage in Canada (Winter, 1992: 1-66; Harris, 1992), the United States (Kellner, 1992; Schiller, 1992; Chomsky, 1992b; Bailie and Frank, 1992; MacArthur, 1993), Britain (Shaw and Carr-Hill, 1992; Hujanen, 1992), Ireland (Corcoran, 1992), India (Sainath, 1992), Malaysia (Nain, 1992), Japan (Gulf Crisis TV Project, 1992), Turkey (Sahin, 1992), Iran (Motamed-Nejad, Badii and Mohsenian-Rad, 1992; Mowlana, Vierling and Tully, 1992), Jordan (Mowlana, Vierling and Tully, 1992), Egypt (Mowlana, Vierling and Tully, 1992), Brazil (Oliveira, 1992), Spain/Catalonia (Borrat, 1992), Soviet Union (Mikitenko, 1992), Finland (Luostarinen, 1992; Hujanen, 1992) Norway (Ottosen, 1992; Johnson and Mathiesen, 1992; Sogstad, 1992), and Sweden (Hvitfelt, 1992; Hadenius, 1992; Nordström, 1992; Nohrstedt, 1992, Hujanen, 1992). Apart from being constrained by the structural nature of dominant news values and the dominance of Western news networks (particularly the role of the Atlanta-based Cable News Network as an international purveyor of "live" television coverage) reporting of the war was further limited by the American-led UN Coalition forces' control of media access through news pools and the Iraqi, Saudi Arabian and Israeli censoring of journalists' reports, (Rosen, 1991; Zelizer, 1992; Vincent, 1992). Even anti-US newspapers in countries such as Iran were largely dependent on Western news agencies as sources (Motamed-Nejad, Badii and Mohsenian-Rad, 1992: 100). With a few exceptions, most of the 1,400 foreign journalists covering the Gulf War from Saudi Arabia and Israel abided by the military
restrictions. Among the most enthusiastic supporters of the news pool system, which was overwhelmingly dominated by American and British news organizations, was NBC's Canadian-born reporter, Arthur Kent - who came to be known as "the Scud Stud" (MacArthur, 1993: 180).

Canadian television networks, like television networks around the world, used CNN feeds to a large extent in their coverage of the Gulf War. While there was less reliance on American sources in the print media in Canada, newspapers did print a substantial number of articles from American and British news services. And although a few journalists did challenge the information and justifications offered by Canadian and other Western politicians for carrying out the mainly one-sided war against a less developed country, most media seemed to have been reduced to the status of cheerleaders for the Coalition forces (Winter, 1992: 1-66; Harris, 1992).

There were some oppositional and alternative views expressed in the mass media, apart from those in the alternative media. But these were drowned out by the torrent of reports and analyses couched in dominant discourses. High profile attempts to get the other side of the story were severely criticized in Western countries. The only remaining American television reporter to remain in Iraq after the bombing had begun, CNN's Peter Arnett, was widely lambasted for being an "Iraqi sympathizer" after interviewing Saddam Hussein and reporting that a factory producing baby milk formula had been destroyed by Coalition air attacks (Kellner, 1992: 293-97). A Toronto Sun editorial titled "TV terrorists" stated:
It was a Twilight Zone show. With much of civilization at war with Iraq, there was CNN yesterday giving a free ride to enemy propaganda. Abdul Amir al-Anbari, Iraq's ambassador to the United Nations, blithely defended Saddam Hussein's frightening Scud missile attack on Israel. It was justified by years of Israeli aggression, he said.

The exchange crystallizes a key issue in every war. When do the media cross the line from being objective observers to giving aid and comfort to the enemy?

"Objectivity" has never meant simply turning on the microphone to everyone and anyone.

Journalistic objectivity, according to this view, seemed to imply turning cameras and microphones to "authorized knowers." Some Conservative Party members of parliament in Britain dubbed the BBC as the "Baghdad Broadcasting Corporation" for showing pictures of the civilian victims of an American air raid on Baghdad (Shaw and Carr-Hill, 1992: 145). Israeli censors took NBC's Martin Fletcher off the air "for reporting what were said to be too many details about a Scud attack on Tel Aviv" (MacArthur, 1993: 110). Contrary to the findings of most researchers on the media coverage of the Gulf War by Western mass media organizations, the Vancouver-based National Media Archive - a branch of the right-wing Fraser Institute - found Canadian and US television networks to be "An Extension of 'Radio Iraq'" (June 6, 1991: 1). There are therefore strong checks on any journalist who would dare to present other than a consensual viewpoint on a matter of such importance as a war in which her/his country is involved.

The major tendencies of the Gulf War coverage were to demonize Iraq's president and its military forces and to underplay or, alternatively, glamorize the
violence carried out by Coalition forces. Saddam Hussein became the personification of the country which was being pulverized by Western warjets: since the primary coverage focused on him personally (it was "Saddam's" missiles, tanks, planes, buildings that were attacked), the systemic destruction of the economic infrastructure of the country went largely unreported during the war. Western reporters described the continual bombing of Baghdad in celebratory terms relating it to "the fireworks finale on the Fourth of July" (The Ottawa Citizen, 17/1/91: A2); the pyrotechnic effects of the "smart bombs" held television audiences enchanted by the wizardry of the state of the art technology. Even ABC's Peter Jennings, seen to be the least jingoistic of American network news anchors (a tendency he attributed to his Canadian origins), remarked in wonder at the "brilliance of laser-guided bombs" (MacArthur, 1993: 110-11). Unlike the Vietnam War, there were few pictures of dead bodies - the Gulf War was mainly presented as a "clean" conflict in which just SCUD missiles and Iraqi military sites were destroyed.

The only people who seemed to be portrayed as victims in the early weeks of the war were Western pilots who had been captured by the Iraqi forces. On January 22, 1991, the front page on The Ottawa Sun had photographs of six "allied airmen" who were described as "HUMAN TARGETS" because Baghdad had indicated it would "disperse the more than 20 prisoners of war to civilian, economic, education and other targets" (The Financial Post, 25/1/91: 14). The implication was that the relentless bombing by the United Nations Coalition
Illustration 12

The Gulf War as a morality play.
THE PUBLISHER'S VIEW

A necessary and just war

War morally justified, PM tells Commons
Says nations have duty to stop Hussein

'A very evil act by a very diabolical man': PM

Iraqi missile hits Tel Aviv homes

Iraq war, Holocaust compared

Brits keep stiff upper lip in face of gulf war

They Don't Need to Fight

The Islamic allies deployed in the Arabian desert have already done their job even if they never fire a single shot

Religion, Arab pride fuel Iraqi war of words
forces since January 16 had not hurt any human beings. In response to the Iraqi tactic, the British prime minister remarked about Hussein, "It is perfectly clear that this man is amoral" (The Ottawa Citizen, 23/1/91: A2). Indeed, the entire conflict was presented as a morality play - a battle between good and evil, the civilized and the barbaric. The American president said about the involvement of the US in the war, "Our cause in just. Our cause is moral. Our cause is right" (Bush, 1991: 261). According to Canadian prime minister Brian Mulroney, one of the main issues guiding Canada's involvement in the Gulf War was "simple morality ... a terrible wrong has been perpetrated in Kuwait by Saddam Hussein and the world community has a moral obligation to step in and stop it" (The Toronto Star, 23/1/91: A19). He characterized the first Iraqi missile attack on Israel as "a very evil act by a very diabolical man" (The Montreal Gazette, 18/1/91: B1) and an opposition party member (Nelson Riis of the New Democratic Party) who had been against Canadian involvement in the war, described it as "barbarism on top of barbarism" (ibid). Joe Clark, the foreign affairs minister, stated: "It is the kind of brutality we have warned about" (The Financial Post, 18/1/91: 28). The German foreign minister compared Hussein's threat to Israel as an attempt at "genocide" (The Globe and Mail, 4/2/91: A3).

This demonization of Hussein served to conceal the scale of violence being carried out by the UN forces. A Jordanian Times editorial stated,

When Saddam sends 38 Scud missiles into Israel he is a terrorist and when the American coalition makes over 90,000 sorties in one month and throws more than 100 thousand tonnes of explosives,
mostly over Iraqi and Kuwaiti civilian targets, they are champions of justice.  

Whereas Western journalists exaggerated the effect of SCUD missiles "raining" on Israel and Saudi Arabia (The Montreal Gazette, 26/1/91: A5), they had largely disregarded the horror caused by some 200 Iraqi SCUDs landing on Iranian cities between 1987 and 1988 during the Iran-Iraq War (Mowlana, 1992: 33). It was widely speculated by Western journalists that the SCUD missile warheads would carry poison gas. On January 17, in reporting the first SCUD against Israel, a Canadian Broadcasting Corporation radio news bulletin actually declared that a mustard gas attack was under way. "In fact, the Americans were the only ones to use chemical warfare, in the form of napalm ... [but this] was buried in the war coverage" (Winter, 1992: 30).

One Saudi Arabian civilian, 13 Israeli civilians, and 28 American soldiers were killed as a result of Iraqi SCUD attacks during the Gulf War (ibid: 34). US military and CIA estimates of Iraqi dead in the war ranged between 100,000 and 250,000. The figures included those killed by missiles launched from the air, land and sea, as well as by other methods such as the burying alive by American forces of Iraqi troops en masse in their trenches and the annihilation of an Iraqi military column retreating from Kuwait on what came to be known as "the highway of death" (ibid: 1). A Harvard University medical team's survey of Iraq estimated in May 1991 that, due to the deliberate Coalition bombing of civilian installations including electricity generating stations across the country, 170,000 more Iraqi
children would die in that year alone (ibid: 36). Yet, during the Gulf War Western mass media largely portrayed "violence" as being carried out by the Iraqi military and not by the United Nations Coalition. The host of ABC's Nightline program declared nearly a week into the almost continual Coalition bombing of Iraqi cities, "Aside from the Scud missile that landed in Tel Aviv earlier, it's been a quiet night in the Middle East" (Lee and Solomon, 1991: xix). It was as if the Western mass media had become completely blind and deaf to the destruction that their governments were carrying out.

Ironically, even when civilians were threatened by Coalition bombing, the blame was laid on the Iraqi government. The Montreal Gazette published a New York Times story on the fate of non-Western foreigners prevented from leaving Iraq, whose second paragraph read:

Because of deteriorating conditions in Baghdad, where water, food and fuel are said to be scarce, the Iraqi move could lead to "large-scale human tragedy if people do not get out," a Western diplomat said. (25/1/91: B1).

The reasons why conditions were deteriorating were not indicated, and the "large-scale human tragedy" did not seem to apply to Iraqis resident in Baghdad. Even a rare article in The Toronto Star that mentioned the concerns of Canadian opposition members of parliament about civilian casualties of Coalition bombing, gave high profile to the military denials and to turning around the blame: "'The only person I know who is targeting civilians is a chap by the name of Saddam Hussein,' said Lieutenant General David Huddleston, deputy chief of defence
staff." When American planes targeted the Al-Amiriyya air raid bomb shelter in Baghdad killing hundreds of people, the US government blamed the Iraqi leader for deliberately placing civilians in the "bunker"; the London-based Daily Mail echoed this line with the front-page title, "Victims of Saddam" (Shaw and Carr-Hill, 1992: 146).

Before, during and after the war, there was a steady stream of negative journalistic descriptions of the Iraqi president who had become the cause of all the problems in the region and the world: "The primary source of instability in the Middle East is the potent combination of Saddam's ambitions and his military strength" (The Ottawa Citizen, 23/2/91: B1); he had "dreams of regional domination" (The Ottawa Citizen, 19/1/91: B6). Hussein was responsible for dashing the hope of world peace in the post-Cold War era: "Half a year ago, many people in the democratic and newly democratising world had begun to hope that war had become obsolete, a shameful anachronism. That was before Aug. 2, when Saddam Hussein's army shot its way into Kuwait" (The Ottawa Citizen, 16/2/91: A12). George Bush, as leader of the "free world," therefore felt compelled to go to war to restore global order:

It is a big idea: a new world order, where diverse nations are drawn together in common cause to achieve the universal aspirations of mankind: peace and security, freedom and the rule of law. (The Ottawa Citizen, 23/2/91: B2)
According to a *Montreal Gazette* editorial, the Gulf War "is the war of every country which values international law and order and the containment of aggression" (13/1/91: B2).

An *Ottawa Sun* editorial declared upon the beginning of the Gulf War:

Now that the fighting has begun, the goal must be a speedy allied victory: The liberation of Kuwait, the return of Iraq to the community of civilized countries and, at long last, the establishment of peace and stability throughout the Middle East. (17/1/91: 10)

The just war had to be fought in order to (re)instate peace - another "war to end all wars," following which utopia would be established. In adherence to the technological myth of Science, "smart bombs" would carry out "surgical strikes" that would eliminate diseased tissue from body of the Middle East to make it whole again. Even Richard Gwyn, a columnist who discussed Northern stereotyping of Arabs and Muslims, played the same tune of peace through war:

> Once our bombs and missiles have completed their mission - as they will - we are going to have to start listening to the voice of the Middle East.¹⁰

Therefore, before we "start listening to the voice of the Middle East" we have to pulverize it with our weapons. As many times before, peace was sought through violence.

"*The World Unites Against Saddam Hussein*"

This was a war between civilization ("the world"/"the international community") and barbarism (Iraq/Saddam Hussein): if Iraq was not punished
human civilization would collapse. The viciousness of the Iraqi leader, which had been disregarded in the 1980s when he was considered an ally of the West against Iran, was now highlighted in order to justify the military actions against him.

Prime minister Brian Mulroney declared that the SCUD attacks on Israel were the acts "of a criminal, which indicates why Saddam Hussein must be dealt with by the world community" (The Montreal Gazette, 18/1/91: B1). Canada's foreign affairs minister was reported saying that "When Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, he threw a gauntlet down to the world" (The Toronto Star, 25/1/91: A18). A Montreal Gazette editorial concluded that the United Nations had to respond forcefully to Iraq's capture of Kuwait: "Otherwise, the weak inherit nothing but annihilation, and the world inherits the law of the jungle" (13/1/91: B2). Yves Fortier, Canada's ambassador to the United Nations stated that "Hussein believes in the law of the jungle, rather than the law of civilized nations" and he went on to suggest that the KGB agents in Baghdad should "take out Saddam Hussein" (The Montreal Gazette, 24/1/91: A5). From "Canada's national newspaper" to the tabloids, most of the country's dailies were united in portraying the war as the "international community" versus Saddam Hussein: on the day after the war began, a Globe and Mail editorial declared, "The world unites against Saddam Hussein" (17/1/91: A14), The Ottawa Citizen carried a story from the Los Angeles Times titled "[NATO] Leaders say war became only solution" (17/1/91: A5) and The Toronto Sun had a headline stating, "World leaders rally behind American offensive" (17/1/91: 6). According to a guest writer in The
Ottawa Citizen, "the management of the crisis poses the greatest challenge to the international community" (21/1/91: B5). George Bush talked about bringing peace and civilization to Iraq:

"From the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates - where civilization began - civilized behaviour can begin anew. We can build a better world, a new world order." (The Ottawa Citizen, 7/2/91: A5)

The Iraqi president was an international outlaw who had to be chastised by the contemporary guardians of civilization, which they would then re-establish in Iraq.

There was a very clear tendency among Western propagandists to dehumanize Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi military forces, as often occurs in cultural constructions of the enemy - especially during wars (see Keen, 1986). General Norman Schwarzkopf, the military head of the Coalition forces, described the Iraqi invaders of Kuwait as beings who were not part of "the same human race as we are" (The Globe and Mail, 28/2/91: A14). An American pilot returning from destroying Iraqi tanks in a night mission said on television, "It's almost like you flipped on the light in the kitchen at night and the cockroaches started scurrying and we're killing them." This particular type of comparison of Iraqis with insects was quite common among the American military personnel (Winter, 1992: 21). An army surplus store in Saskatoon printed up T-shirts with a mock advertisement for a bogus "Iraqnophobia" movie (The Leader Post, 15/1/91: A3), parodying the
1990 film *Arachnophobia* (the fear of spiders). Iraqis were also likened to being hunted like wild game:

During the brief land war launched by Washington, the allies shot thousands of fleeing Iraqi soldiers and civilians in the back. The shooting was described as being like "a giant hunt." The Iraqis were driven ahead, "like animals," by the allied air and land attacks. U.S. pilots were said to have likened their attack on the convoy to "shooting fish in a barrel." The retreating Iraqis were said to have presented a "bounty of targets." "We hit the jackpot," one pilot said. "It was like a turkey shoot." (Aksoy and Robins, 1992: 209)

The term "turkey shoot," according to Noam Chomsky, was used to refer to the US troops' slaughter of Filipinos at the turn of the century: "one of those deeply rooted themes of the culture that surfaces as if by reflex at appropriate moments" (1992b: 52). The approval of the authorities of the use of these terms to describe the Iraqi enemy was implicit in the fact that all reports released from the Saudi Arabia and Israel was subject to strict military censorship.

The dehumanization of Iraqis and the use of euphemisms when talking about the victims of Coalition attacks served to construct a war in which little human blood seemed to be spilled. American political and military leaders talked about the "unavoidable collateral damage" caused by the "smart bombs"; the Rockeye bombs dropped by US planes "each dispersed 247 bomblets containing needle-sharp shrapnel designed for 'soft' targets, in other words people" (Aksoy and Robins, 1992: 209).

One TV reporter told (the U.S.) after the first 800 sorties had pulverized Iraqi forces, "Soon we'll have to stop the air war and start killing human beings." Journalists such as this one came to
subscribe to the view that no one was dying - or at least no one of importance. (Winter, 1992: 21)

The reporting of the "clean war" in which Patriot missiles battled with SCUDs and Tomahawk missiles intelligently sought out military targets had almost completely eliminated any knowledge of the ongoing killing as well as of the physical and psychological maiming of people.

Much of the dehumanization of Iraqis was focused on Saddam Hussein, who had come to embody the country that was being bombed. In the run-up to the war, a Washington Post columnist wrote an essay, published on August 7, 1990, headlined "Bush and the Beast of Baghdad" (Winter, 1992: 27).

Two weeks into the Gulf War, the New York Times published an unusually large cartoon across the top of the op-ed page. Titled "The Descent of Man," it showed from left to right a Clark-Gable-like man in a suit and tie, a gorilla, a monkey, a venomous snake, and finally Saddam Hussein, depicted as small and filthy with a cloud of flies surrounding his head. This grotesque caricature was reminiscent of Nazi propaganda that presented Jews as subhuman, and Ku Klux Klan literature comparing African-Americans to apes. (Lee and Solomon, 1991: xxi)

Hussein was also described as a "monster" (Toronto Star, 12/1/91: D1), "devil," "Satan" (National Media Archive, April 1991: 7), and "the Antichrist" (The Ottawa Citizen, 28/1/95: C7).

The Iraqi president was often portrayed as acting out characteristically Arab tendencies. In this, Western propagandists were adhering to the cognitive scripts according to which Arabs and Muslims supposedly act. An Ottawa Citizen journalist described Hussein as "no more than a very proficient Arab terrorist"
(4/2/91: E7) who would use chemical weapons in the war. A retired Canadian
brigadier-general, Jean-V. Allard, speaking a few days before the war began, said,

C'est un fanatique; comme les autres Arabes, et il ne mérite pas
d'être membre des Nations Unies et d'autres organismes du genre:
ça n'a plus de sens. Les Arabes, ce sont des bandits. (La Presse,
14/1/91: 3)

An NBC backgrounder rebroadcast by CBC's Newsworld service on January 20
linked what was viewed as the inherent nature of violent tendencies in
contemporary Iraq to the medieval Muslim civilization and all the way back to the
Sumerians.

The key to this question is the polarization between Western
civilization and its Other - represented in this episode by the
endemic "barbarism" of Arab culture - and the contrast between
our enlightened modernity and their benighted dark ages. "Their
twentieth century is not ours," wrote Alain Finkielkraut [in the
London Guardian]. They have allowed honour to prevail over
democracy, and force and machismo over freedom." According to
Martin Woolacott [also in The Guardian], Arab life suffered from
"a problem of irrationality and fantasy, a "sickness" centred on the

The "Arab mind" was the subject of much discussion during the Gulf War. An
editorial in The Ottawa Citizen discussed "What should 'victory' mean?":

In 1973, for instance, Egypt's forces were only saved from defeat at
Israeli hands by a ceasefire orchestrated by the superpowers. Yet in
Arab terms, a great victory was won simply because the Egyptians
managed to cross the Suez canal in a surprise attack that put the
Israelis temporarily on the defensive.
In the same dubious tradition, Saddam may be ready to accept
military defeat in return for victory in other forms. (4/1/91)
In an article reprinted from *The San Francisco Examiner* in *The Ottawa Citizen*, the writer explored the sources for the seemingly inexplicable strategy that the Iraqi president had adopted:

The answer lies in the mind of Saddam and in the profound forces of Middle East history, culture and thinking that have nurtured the nihilistic side of the Arab mind. (17/1/91: A1)

Another piece from *The Financial Times* of London published in the "Insight" section of the Toronto-based *Financial Post* stated that "the Palestinian question is so deeply embedded in the psyche of the whole Arab world that every problem in the region is tainted by it" (23/1/91: 14). The "Arab psyche" was thus used to explain Saddam Hussein's actions: he was the manifestation of millennia of Arab history and cultural (mal)development that had produced congenital nihilism, barbarism and propensity towards violence.

Descriptions of other non-Iraqi Arabs during the Gulf War were also couched within negative frames. A *Los Angeles Times* report, used by *The Ottawa Citizen*, depicted the Arab League's deliberations on the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in this manner: "While the international community has demonstrated unprecedented unity in trying to force President Hussein to retreat, the 22-member Arab bloc is in confused disarray" (11/8/90: B2). The "international community" - a euphemism for countries led and dominated by Western powers - was thus distinguished from the "Arab bloc." Another article in the same issue of the *Ottawa daily* reprinted from *The New York Times* stated that the disagreement in the Arab League "essentially pitted pro-western states, particularly the oil-rich
against the radicals" (11/8/90: A7). Thus, Syria - a longtime pariah for Americans and on the US State Department's list of "terrorist states" - was no longer a radical since it had sided with the West against Iraq. (No mention was made of Libya, which was both oil-rich and on the same State Department list as Syria; it has not joined the UN Coalition.)

Even after some Arab governments decided to become part of the Coalition, there were frequent references to their lack of resolve and even their potential treachery towards the "international community." Three days after the UN attack began the publisher of The Ottawa Citizen wrote an editorial titled, "A necessary and just war" stating,

The volatility of the quite remarkable international coalition, particularly the Arab component, and of its collective will to act against Hussein and his dreams of regional domination and continuing holy wars demanded action sooner rather than later. (19/1/91: B6)

Thus the "volatility ... of the Arab component" of the Coalition became the reason for not letting economic sanctions and negotiations take their course, which many voices in Canada and elsewhere were urging. Even in the third week of the war, a columnist for the paper wrote, "Under pressure from their own anti-Israeli publics, they [Arab members of the Coalition] might swivel their missile launchers toward Israel - or just quit the war altogether" (4/2/91: A7). A Globe and Mail write-up suggested that if "support for the war were to flag seriously in the West and the military campaign lose steam" then Syria's president Hafez "Assad will be the first to jump ship, get out of the coalition" (6/2/91: A7). In some narratives it seemed
that the term "Arab" meant those who supported Saddam Hussein; a story about security measures against possible terrorism by Iraqi agents related:

Seventeen Arabs were arrested on their arrival at Cairo airport with false passports, the report said... They included four Iraqis, two Jordanians, one Tunisian and 10 Palestinians. Weapons and explosives were found in their possession. (The Ottawa Citizen, 8/2/91: A3)

It would appear from this paragraph from a story, by the US-based Knight-Ridder news service, that the Egyptian officers who arrested the seventeen people were not themselves Arab.

Judging from the focus on "Islam" and Muslims in the Western mass media's Gulf War coverage, it would appear that "Arab" or "Iraqi" also exclusively connoted "Muslim." The substantial Iraqi Christian minority was virtually ignored. Tariq Aziz, the Iraqi foreign minister who was ubiquitous in the Western coverage of the Baghdad government, was rarely identified as a Christian; on the other hand, Saddam Hussein's own parading of his newly-found Muslim credentials were given a high profile. A San Francisco Examiner backgrounder on "How Iraqi president looks at the situation," reprinted in The Ottawa Citizen, stated,

Saddam's preference for martyrdom in battle is an honored form of demise in Arab history, one that goes back to the 7th century death of Ali [sic] in the battle of Karbala. It is also a style of death that the Moslem religion rewards with an assured place in paradise, no matter what sins one may have committed. (17/1/91: A2)

The Ottawa daily also published an article from The Independent which carried the lead: "The most powerful armies in Christendom are now poised to fight the
largest military force in the Muslim world" (15/1/91: A5). A cover story on "ISLAM AND THE GULF WAR" in Maclean's magazine linked the Muslim supporters of Saddam Hussein to the "rise of fundamentalism [which] has underscored the underlying differences between the Christian and Moslem worlds" 11/2/91: 35). A columnist for Montreal's La Presse stated, "Ou l'Irak est rapidement écrasé: le monde alors devra composer avec le ressentiment et l'humiliation arabes, et la montée du fanatisme islamique" (17/1/91: B3). Many mass media reports speculated in this way on the defeat of Iraq and the growth of "Islamic fanaticism" as a threat to the (Christian) world. The Gulf War had become an apocalyptic conflict between the two world religions, whose adherents had engaged in wars against each other over the last millennium.

Journalists were also not above using biblical references to describe the conflict. An Ottawa Citizen journalist likened the combat between the American Patriot missile and the Iraqi SCUD to that between David and Goliath.

Combined with its [the Patriot's] advanced guidance system, it renders the relatively stupid, slow Scud into a Goliath facing David - except David has a laser-guided exploding stone. (23/1/91)

The ABC suppertime news broadcast on January 19, 1991 showed "an American airman in Saudi Arabia writing a message on a bomb being put in place, and then read it loud for the audience: 'If Allah doesn't answer, ask for Jesus'" (Law, 1991: 61).

In case anyone had missed the broad hints about the Gulf War being a battle between good and evil, a journalist for the London-based Independent
Illustration 13

Islamization of the Gulf War.
WAR IN THE GULF

BOMBING ANGRERS ARABS, MUSLIMS

Iraqi attack on Israel worries Canadian Jewish community

Attack feeds Muslim anger

Palestinians and Iraqis targeted for stepped-up security checks

A CAUTIONOUS HOME FRONT

TERRORIST ATTACKS ARE A THREAT

City Muslims pray for Allah to hold back the fire in the Gulf

"Before the judgement day, you will see a big fire in the Mecca land (Saudi Arabia). The fire will be so big that its light will shine off the necks of the camels in Lebanon, Syria and Palestine."

- Translated from an Arabic speech by protest leader Abd Al-Aziz Al-Humaid at about 600 A.D.

Muslim's message maddens

Local Muslim cleric sees Saddam as

God's agent

The person is as a person who serves the person, and the person is as the person, he

The person is as a person who serves the person, and the person is as the person, he

The person is as a person who serves the person, and the person is as the person, he

The person is as a person who serves the person, and the person is as the person, he

If a man is a good man, it's a罪

The person is as a person who serves the person, and the person is as the person, he

The person is as a person who serves the person, and the person is as the person, he

The person is as a person who serves the person, and the person is as the person, he

The person is as a person who serves the person, and the person is as the person, he

The person is as a person who serves the person, and the person is as the person, he
described the bombardment of Iraqi troops, in a report republished in *The Ottawa Citizen*, in this manner:

The night raids began at 7:15, barely an hour after dark, but already four huge red glows appeared in the northeast horizon like a scene from *Gotterdamersung*. (7/2/91: A2)

An apocalyptic battle from the Wagnerian opera was used here to underline that, following weeks of aerial assault, the twilight of the conflict approached as the American-led Coalition prepared for the ground war. Another article in the *Citizen* had a large headline stating, "HIGH NOON FOR BUSH: U.S. offering one of two certainties - withdrawal from Kuwait or ground war" (23/2/91: B1). An accompanying cartoon had Bush in the guise of Gary Cooper in the movie *High Noon*, with a sheriff's badge and a gun in holster, striding alone and purposefully towards the reader. The Canadian newspaper and its readership shared this model with others in the world where Hollywood imagery has become part of the dominant cultural discourses: "Toward the end of the Gulf war when Bush issued an ultimatum to Saddam, which would expire at midday on 23 February 1991, many American and British newspapers that morning carried the headline 'High Noon'" (A. Ahmed, 1992: 232).

From the Bible to Wagner to Hollywood classics, journalists drew on the mythic to portray the Gulf War as a personal combat between the American president as the personification of good and his Iraqi counterpart as that of evil. In a discussion on a CBS *Sunday Morning* program, a senior reporter (Bill Plant) said that Bush had rejected the most recent proposals for peace agreed to by Iraq
because without the ground war the American president would not have been able "to humiliate Saddam Hussein. He really wanted to go mano-a-mano with Hussein." Such cultural constructions of the Gulf War in the global media narrative helped present it as a combat between the two men who represented, respectively, Christian temperance, modern rationality and technological prowess and "Islamic" fanaticism, medieval barbarism and mindless violence.

Notes


2. Even though Saddam Hussein's government remains primarily secularist in its policy orientations, it has been presented in Northern discourses as being an "uncompromising Islamic regime" (*John Kettle's Newsletter*, 1/1/95: 3).

3. See Zuhair Kashmeri (1991), Abu Laban and Abu-Laban (1991), American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, (1992); and Committee to Advise the Attorney-General on Racial Vilification (1992). According to Hanny Hassan of the Council of the Muslim Community in Canada, even as late as 1995 some Muslim children in the country were still suffering from psychological trauma resulting from harassment experienced during the Gulf War. Mistreatment of Arabs and Muslims was also reported following the bombing of a US federal building in Oklahoma City in April 1995 due to intense speculation in the mass media that this act had been carried out by "Islamic fundamentalists," until the arrest of right-wing suspects with links to white supremacist groups (Hassan, 1995). Also see Anis (1996).


5. Ann L. Hibbard and T.A. Keenleyside, however, concluded that "the Canadian press did not act as a pliant tool of the government, preparing the public to support an early resort to war in the way in which studies have indicated the American media did" (1995: 263). But their study used traditional quantitative methodology, which failed to take into account the significance of dominant discourses in determining the overall message of media coverage. Soderland (1990) demonstrates how, although American print coverage of an international event was quantitatively larger, its qualitative differences with Canadian coverage were minimal.

6. For a discussion how Canadian and American mass media made dominant use of "authorized knowers" to develop a "common sense perspective" about the Gulf War, see Winter (1992: 40-45).

7. Indeed, all other tragedies around the world seemed to take a back seat during the conflict. At the end of August and in early September, 1990, when the news about a massacre of 200 (mostly African) foreigners in Liberia broke (*The Ottawa Citizen*, 1/9/90: A10), it was given a very low profile compared to the front-page focus on Westerners whom the Iraqi government was not granting
permission to leave the country.

8. Quoted in Mowlana, Vierling and Tully (1992: 171). Jordan's government supported Iraq in the war, although it was not militarily involved.

9. Five years after the Gulf War, integration propagandists were still disregarding the scale of destruction and death perpetrated by Western powers: "By any previous standard, the aerial bombing of Iraq was remarkably successful in avoiding civilian casualties. Precision-guided weapons are not perfect, but they enabled the allies to cripple Iraq's war-making potential without inflicting a Dresden, a Hiroshima or even a Grozny on the Iraqi people. As for the ground war, not only did the coalition's troops suffer fewer than 500 fatal casualties, five weeks of unimpeded air attacks caused so many Iraqi troops to desert their front-line positions that Iraq's military losses in the final ground offensive were also far lower than expected." Gwynne Dyer, "Critics of 1991 Gulf War have been proved wrong," The Gazette (16/1/96), B3. No mention was made here of the hundreds of thousands of Iraqis who were killed through direct violence carried out by the UN Coalition forces, and others who were the victims of the destruction of the country's physical infrastructure.

10. Richard Gwyn, "After this, we'll take Arabs seriously," The Toronto Star (16/1/91: A2).


12. A bar in Winnipeg also planned an "Iraq-no-phobia" dance, billed as an "End of the World Dance," which was cancelled due to complaints from city residents. At least one newspaper published an editorial criticizing the plan (Saskatoon Star, 16/1/91: A5).

13. There is a tendency in dominant discourses to present "Allah" as being distinct from "God." For example, a Calgary Herald article on Calgarians of various religious backgrounds praying for a peaceful resolution of the Gulf conflict related that while Christians and Jews were praying to "God," "Calgary's Muslim groups have been bowing in prayer to Mecca asking Allah for peace" (13/1/91: A6).

14. In another well-known phrase from a Hollywood movie (Dirty Harry, 1971), George Bush dared Saddam Hussein to "make my day." Such "sentences are made immortal through the media, a cultural gift to the entire world. They are quoted, parodied, copied and are constantly in print" (A. Ahmed, 1992: 232). Indeed, they serve as buttresses for the global narrative.

Conclusion
Towards Informed Reporting

This dissertation has sought to show how the spectre of "Islamic peril" is portrayed in the mass media's reporting of international relations. It has attempted to accomplish this task by seeking to understand the symbolic construction and utilization of messages within a set of myths underlying technological society. Canadian print media, which were primarily studied here, adhere to the dominant international discourses on violence. They also accord an implicit primacy to nation-states, particularly to elite nations such as the American superpower, the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and the members of the Group of Seven. At the bottom of this hierarchy of nations are pariah states like Iran, Iraq, Libya, Syria, and North Korea, which have been termed "terrorist regimes." The "wholesale violence" carried out on the global scale by elite nations as well as by all states on the domestic level is generally invisible in the mass media; on the other hand, the "retail violence" of sub-national groups, who are termed terrorists, is highlighted. Also unseen is structural violence, which is omnipresent at the domestic and international levels, and which indirectly but inexorably leads to the maiming and death of people.

Canadian media also adhere to the dominant Northern discourses on "Islam." Centuries-old primary stereotypes, particularly that of the "violent Muslim," continue to influence contemporary perceptions. The media image of the "Islamic terrorist" has become a staple in coverage of Muslim societies. Critical examination of the motivations and social conditions of people claiming to act in
the cause of "Islam" is seldom conducted, and almost any deviant activity by
people who happen to be Muslim is usually attributed to their religion. Whereas
the issue of terrorism perpetrated by some Muslim groups should indeed be of
concern, similar depictions of Christians, Jews or followers of other religions
carrying out violence in the name of their respective faiths are rarely carried out.
Describing a war as a *jihad* - which is the subject of much debate among Muslims
- becomes a way for Northern propagandists to discredit the motives of Muslim
combatants who are considered hostile to Northern interests. Even when conflicts
result primarily from political, economic, or cultural causes, they are described as
religious wars, especially when the Muslim antagonists appear to be the villains.

Confrontations are often dichotomized by the mass media as "Christian
versus Muslim," "Islam versus the West," or "Sunni versus Shia" - this is usually
due to lazy journalism that seeks pat answers for complex situations. The current
struggles in Muslim societies to deal with centuries of decay and exploitation -
both domestic and colonial - and the attempts to confront these problems with
indigenous religio-cultural approaches are usually reduced to conflicts between
"fundamentalists" and "modernists." This tendency dovetails with discursive
constructions of the "New World Order" in the aftermath of the Cold War, in
which the "Evil Empire" of the communist East is often replaced with the Muslim
East. The process is facilitated by the resilience of the topoi of violence, lust,
greed and barbarism that dominant Northern discourses draw from in their
constructions of "Islam."
Since the mass media in Canada share core cultural images about Muslims with other Northern societies, they seem to have little difficulty reproducing these primary stereotypes in their reportage. In any case, while newspapers in Canada do have some news correspondents in Muslim societies, they remain heavy users of wire copy from American and European sources. Not only are age-old topoi used as frames to interpret current events, but whenever Muslim groups are in conflict with a Northern power the reporting tends to favour the latter. This is a result of the combination of shared fields of cultural and ideological meanings as well as the logistics of news reporting.

Although this study has not dealt with the stereotypes that Muslims have about others, there seems to exist an almost reciprocal level of misunderstanding and derision in a number of Muslim discourses about the North (cf. Mernissi, 1992; A. Ahmed, 1992). However, the latter as a whole is economically, technologically and militarily more powerful and has hegemony over international discourses; on the other hand, Muslim societies generally lack the communications hardware or knowhow to have a material effect on a global basis. Nevertheless, while the latter have long become familiar with the intrusions from the North, Northern societies are, over the last two decades, increasingly finding themselves having to come to terms with "Islam." One-fifth of humanity adheres to this religion; the number of Muslims continue to increase at a significant pace because of their generally high birth rates and a rapid rate of conversion. Islam will soon be the second most-popular faith after Christianity in most Northern
countries due to immigration patterns and the numbers of native-born Europeans and North Americans becoming adherents. The Muslim Other who used to be far away across the oceans is now more likely to be a next-door neighbour. As Homi Bhabha has suggested, the postcolonial Other, whether inside or outside the Northern nation, is to be accounted for within the "enunciative 'present' of modernity" (1994: 250) - the Self is finding it increasingly difficult to completely distinguish Itself from the Other.

Does journalism have a role in responding to this situation? This question is not asked for the purposes of seeking coverage that overlooks the ills and problems of Muslims societies, but that which provides informed reporting by placing issues within their sociohistorical and current contexts. Many Northern journalists have already been genuinely adapting their methods to take into account the increasing ethnic, cultural and religious diversity of their societies (Miller and Walsh, 1995). However, even though there have been some efforts to better understand Muslims, the older discourses on "Islam" continue largely to provide the frameworks for their portrayal. Assuming that Northern news organizations are interested in producing informed coverage of their objects, what can be done to allow for journalists to have a better comprehension and provide knowledgeable reportage about Muslims? (I have deliberately avoided using the terms "objectivity" - a human impossibility; "accuracy" - an ideal more suited to mathematics, not journalism; "balance" - often reduced to ritually supplying just two points of view that may not be very different; or "fair" - the "Fairness
Doctrine" in American journalism has been primarily interpreted as the requirement to have "balance.") An ethical obligation to provide informed coverage would involve going beyond dominant scripts that govern traditional reporting of the subject matter, seeking diverse viewpoints on "positive" and "negative" aspects of the story, and avoiding gratuitously furthering generalizations and stereotypes.\(^1\) Bad journalism is replete with speculation, false dichotomies and absolutes ("the gulf between Islam and the West can never be bridged"). The institutional structures of the mass media, not least of all the tyranny of the deadline, militate against the construction of an informed report. However, this is the challenge that the journalist faces in enhancing the professionalism of her/his craft. It is a challenge that is also to be acknowledged by the technical, managerial and executive ranks of news organizations.

The present inquiry has used Jacques Ellul's framework of technological myths to study the cultural constructions of "Islamic violence" in news flows from Muslim to Northern societies. However, as indicated in the Introduction, Ellul does not attempt to explore possible alternatives to the dominant operations of the mass media. This dissertation will now survey a number of thoughtful proposals made over the last few years about the ways in which communication between Northern and Muslim societies can be improved. While issues of infrastructure and hardware and the larger problems such as the structure of the "community of nations" and its attendant inequities perpetuated through global political, economic and military imbalances are of relevance, this discussion is limited to
the topic of inter-cultural communication. And although the role of Muslims in inhibiting harmonious relations with Northern societies is explored briefly, the primary focus of this dissertation - as indicated at the outset - is the part played by the Northern-dominated international mass media in the constructions of "Islam."

**False Universalism**

The North remains hegemonic despite the implicit references in contemporary dominant discourses that about an equality among nations. Journalistic references to "the international community" or "world opinion" usually serve as euphemisms for consensus among northern states. The mass media's enthronement of the heads of permanent members of the Security Council or of the G-7 countries as "world leaders" even though they do not represent the interests of the billions of people outside their particular countries. While United Nations conventions speak of the universal ideals of freedom, democracy and equality, these principles remain sadly absent in many parts of the world. There does not appear to be strong commitment on the part of "world leaders" for freedom, democracy and equality in the South. Their frequent support for despotic leaderships who brutally suppress their own populations betrays their lip-service to international conventions on human rights. Even in the West, where the the individual may have more control over her/his life, elites - through skilful alternation between consensus and coercion - ultimately make the important decisions for society.
The Gulf War was a primary example of this tendency. Western powers swiftly mobilized a massive international campaign to reinstall Kuwait's monarchy, that has shown little regard for the rights of large numbers of the country's residents. This support seemed motivated not by the ideals of democracy and justice but by the facts that the Kuwaiti government sells petroleum to Western oil companies and parks billions of dollars - left over from those spent on Western-made consumer goods and weapons - in Western banks. The feminist Moroccan scholar, Fatima Mernissi, asks, Will Western bankers and generals fly to the rescue of Arab women deprived of their rights, as they did for Kuwait? The future will tell how much sacrifice the West is prepared to make for the democracy it has taught us to love so much. The future will tell if the West will be a pioneer in establishing those universal values that it preaches and that we have come to love. The West has been given the opportunity to show us that its noble ideas really are the basis of a civilization that is more advanced, more ethical than any other. In fact, if the West uses its power to install democracy in the Arab world, it will scuttle its own interests, which the status quo, strengthened by the Gulf War, guarantees. For democracy in the Arab world means the passing of power to the millions of young people who dream of using oil resources for their own advantage. (Mernissi, 1992: 167)

However, the Northern mass media avoid these awkward issues and focus instead on the more comfortable images of Islamists performing terrorist acts - in this confirming our moral and ethical superiority. Our own direct and structural violence against Muslim societies remains invisible in these discourses.

As they echoed George Bush's call for a "New World Order," journalists reaffirmed the image of universal "just war" led by America against evil. Implicit
in this quest for international utopia was that it would usher in world peace marked by freedom, democracy and equality for all human beings. But this was an illusion. In their failure to deconstruct the propaganda of their own governments and those of repressive Southern regimes, the North-based mass media become complicit in entrenching the international status quo. The research done on the coverage of the Gulf War in several countries - whose media remain dependent on global news networks - provides us with a clear indication of the emergence of an internationally dominant media narrative. The major news agencies and the global broadcasting networks such as CNN and BBC operate on the fundamental premise that they are largely objective and report "world news" in a generally unbiased fashion, akin to social science methodology. The modern scientific method, a universalized discourse derived from the North, is supposed to provide as clear as possible a picture of the truth. This view belies the reality of knowledge-gathering, journalism in this case, as a cultural practice necessarily influenced by collective memories imbedded in myths, legends as well as "classic" pieces of literature that continue to shape our worldviews.

The self-awareness of one's own cognitive processes is the first step towards the production of less ethnocentric and more authentic accounts of events. Indeed, Said, Kabbani and Hentsch, among others, have attempted to demonstrate that the portrayal of the Muslim East has served to project the less-attractive Northern qualities of the Self onto the nearest Other. Since the Northern "gaze into the Orient had turned, as in a convex mirror, to reflect the Occident that had
produced it" (Kabbani, 1986: 85), Northern "self-knowledge must lead by way of the [Muslim] Other" (Hentsch, 1992: 204). Akbar Ahmed urges that the Western mass media, which seemed so eager to support the "just war" should be equally willing to foster democracy in Muslim societies in order to create a better global society: "These problems are interwoven, binding Muslims and non-Muslims together. There can be no just and viable world order - let alone a "New World Order" - if these wrongs are not redressed" (1992: 265).

Not only are there discursive links between violence and the media, but also technological ones. Mernissi draws attention to the technological relationship between the Northern media and Northern military: the international hegemony of both has transgressed the borders of Muslims societies.

The enemy is no longer just on the earth; he occupies the heavens and stars [with her/his satellites] and rules over time [with the Christian calendar and Universal Coordinated Time]. He seduces one's wife, veiled or not, entering through the skylight of television. Bombs are only an incidental accessory for the new masters. Cruise missiles are for great occasions and the inevitable sacrifices. In normal times they nourish us with "software": advertising messages, teenage songs, everyday technical information, courses for earning diplomas, languages and codes to master. (9)

It is up to the North to decide whether satellites will be used for education, propaganda, or missiles. Unfortunately, it has hitherto used the technology to create international consensus in its own favour, failing which it has resorted to coercion.
Despite their self-assumed universalist posture ("the White man's burden"), Northern societies remain tribal at a very fundamental level. They generally continue to pursue an ethnocentric agenda at international fora, developing a political, economic and socio-cultural infrastructure that reflects Northern values and strengthens Northern positions vis-à-vis the South. This bolsters the structures put in place during and in the aftermath of the colonial era. Contemporary international law largely replicates the values of the Christian international law on which it is based, and world trade agreements reinforce the economic hegemony of Northern industry and agriculture. The preferential arrangements within the European Union simultaneously raise the barricades against Muslim neighbours in Asia Minor and North Africa, with whom they have had long trading and cultural relationships, as well as against non-White minorities within. And the mass media replicate this religious dichotomization by framing conflicts as "Islam versus Christianity."

Citing from Joseph Campbell, Mernissi remarks that even such a momentous and technologically significant event as the first human landing on the moon was not bereft of primitive ritual (1992: 145-46). The universalizing nature of Neil Armstrong's resounding statement, "one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind" notwithstanding, he proceeded to install a tribal totem onto the moonscape and then treated his attentive, international, earthbound audience with a quotation from his religion's scripture. Whereas most Americans may not view the planting of their national flag and recitation from the Bible as contrary to the
universalist ethos, the use of a Libyan or Iraqi flag and a Koranic verse in a similar situation would most likely be condemned as signs of Arab chauvinism and religious fundamentalism.

A major obstacle standing in the way of a truly universal order is the myth of the Nation. Emerging in eighteenth-century Europe to demarcate territory occupied by distinctive ethno-linguistic groups - the concept has led to the organization of the entire world into a "community of nations." Even though borders are supposed to be disappearing under the onslaught of global communication and trading links, nationalism remains a potent force. Whereas certain aspects of political and economic distinctiveness have been merged under the European Union, individual nation-states - with national totems, national taxes, national bureaucracies and national military structures remain largely intact. Horizontal divisions of people into different nations allows for better vertical controls and amassing of power by their respective elites.

States run history as private clubs run their own affairs; Western states are worried by unemployment, inflation, income, security, and comfort of the citizens only to win elections. Third World states, and among them those Arab states more strongly dependent on the West for their survival, are bothered by their lack of legitimacy as long they remain unable to introduce an authentic democracy. (Arkoun, 1991: 63)

Dominant media discourses take for granted the absolute sovereignty of a particular group of people over a specific piece of territory - the concept of shared sovereignty appears to be problematic under this form of thinking. It allows for the
hegemonic domination by the strongest group, and in extreme cases, the "ethnic cleansing" of the territory by the forced removal of all others resident there.

Whereas some mass media institutions (particularly broadcasters) have to follow certain national regulations in order to retain their licenses, most journalists are under no professional obligation to adhere dogmatically to the myth of the Nation. Under liberal freedoms in most Northern states they could conceivably scrutinize the idea of the Nation which has been posited as the only way to organize political affairs, and particularly the national state's use of violence - both domestically and internationally. Challenges of smaller nation-states against powerful ones as well as of sub-national groups and "international terrorists" would be better understood by deconstructing the myth of the Nation. Alternative journalistic discourses need to make transparent how the experiences of people who happen to be indigenous to a particular territory are manipulated and couched within the national framework.

As Seamus Deane put it for the Irish case, "The myth of Irishness, the notion of Irish unreality, the notions surrounding Irish eloquence, are all political themes upon which the literature has batten to an extreme degree since the nineteenth century when the idea of national character was invented." The job facing the cultural intellectual is therefore not to accept the politics of identity as given, but to show how all representations are constructed, for what purpose, by whom, and with what components. (Said, 1993: 313-14)

Instead of acting as instruments of integration propaganda, the mass media would be doing an immense service to their readers and audiences in enabling them to
understand the relationships between individuals, groups and with societal institutions by continually uncovering the myths underlying them.

Demystifying Muslim Societies

A significant part of the responsibility for the failure of Northern mass media to provide informed coverage of Muslim societies lies with Muslims themselves. Underpinning the issue of miscommunication between Muslims and their Northern observers are a number of serious societal problems among the former. Muslim societies have had shortcomings in developing effective political leaderships, genuinely democratic and self-sufficient societies, creative strategies for harnessing human and material resources, independent infrastructures for scientific research, contemporary methodologies to study indigenous intellectual heritages, and workable mechanisms for conflict resolution among Muslims and with non-Muslims. The results have been instability, poverty, hopelessness and a lack of confidence that makes individuals susceptible to the simplistic solutions offered by Islamists and political extremists. Overemphasis on material values by the modernist discourses of development adopted by most governments of Muslim countries have also made the solutions based on narrow scriptural interpretation attractive. (The search for spiritual values is discussed below.)

Also among the key problems of Muslim societies has been the failure to understand the North, and particularly the West. The ideas of liberalism were introduced into Muslim lands in the last century, but an appreciation of concepts
such as the freedom of expression seems largely absent. Even though the rights and freedoms of individuals in democratic societies are usually modulated by structures of power, they remain integral to the self-image of most Western societies. These contradictions appear confusing to many Muslims who find it hard to reconcile images of the West's ethical and moral values with its secularism. They often stand bewildered at the North's kaleidoscopically-shifting media images and plethora of consumer products, which they consume without comprehending either their cultural origins or their long-term effects on themselves. Western support for Israeli governments which dispossessed Palestinians of their lands and destroyed their property brought into doubt the ideals of universal justice born in Europe. In a reversal of a long historical tradition of inter-communal tolerance, anti-Israeli feelings mutated for a significant proportion of Muslims into anti-Jewish sentiments. This in turn has led dominant Northern discourses to view "Islam" as being anti-Judaic.

When Salman Rushdie appeared to offend the sensibilities of Muslims, some were goaded by self-serving demagogues into reacting through violence. This reaction in the name of "Islam" was interpreted as barbarism by those Northern observers who encoded the conflict "as Freedom of Speech versus [Islamic] Terrorism" (Spivak, 1990: 57; also see Bhabha, 1994: 225-26), despite Rushdie's own declaration that "I have never seen this controversy as a struggle between Western freedoms and Eastern unfreedom" (1991: 396). There seemed to be no grey space, no occasion for second thought in dominant Northern
discourses. Muslims who seriously attempted to grapple with the "Rushdie Affair" and expressed some reservations about the content of *The Satanic Verses* tended to be lumped in with the "fundamentalists" by certain self-appointed guardians of Western freedom, some of whom had not even bothered to read the book. The latter demanded no less than a complete acceptance of the tome: "many liberal intellectuals sounded like Inquisition priests in their shrill and blanket condemnations" (A. Ahmed, 1992: 261-62). Needless to say, they were astonished at Rushdie's own (albeit short-lived) return to the fold of "Islam." The misunderstandings of each other on the parts of Northern and Muslim societies seem to feed on each other generate an increasing number of distortions.

There have, however, been serious attempts on both sides to learn about the Other. A significant proportion of the work currently emerging from Orientalist establishments seeks to be more cognizant of indigenous Muslim values. In October 1990, as Northern integration propagandists were drawing a dark picture of the Iraqi Muslim enemy, one gathering of Muslim and non-Muslim scholars meeting in Indonesia was engaged in discussion about the interface of Muslim and Northern societies. Discourse at the international seminar on the "Expressions of Islam in Buildings" ranged on issues such as the meanings of "modernity," "tradition," "secularism" and "humanism" as they related to Muslims. Some participants noted that although modernists among Muslims have rushed to embrace Northern education and consumer goods as well as industrial,
electronic and military hardware, there has been little impetus to develop "intellectual modernity." The latter, according to Azim Nanji (1991), participates in many discourses, some of which challenge the very notion of rational discourse... we live in a world where modernism has become post-modernism and... post-modernism itself is being revised so that it is not entirely clear in which realm one finds oneself at any given point!... The existence of a methodological "Tower of Babel", particularly in the universities and intellectual centres where we function, ought not, however, cause us to withdraw from an engagement. The task at hand is not to lock ourselves into any one discourse, but to be open to the way in which we can create an equilibrating intellectual discourse of our own. (220) Intellectual modernity... ought not to be seen as a totalizing discourse, but as a perspective, as a set of tools of comprehension which unlock creativity and release the potential for a constructive dialogue with the community in its contemporary environment. (222)

Such tentative searches for alternative approaches by Muslims are generally drowned out by the drum beat of the discourses intent on highlighting the differences between "us" and "them."

Whereas the primary responsibility for the contemporary problems of Muslim societies lies with their decision-makers, it is worth exploring the historical background that contributed to the present situation. Fatima Mernissi's multidisciplinary (drawing from mythology, history, political science, anthropology, sociology, and social psychology) Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World highlights certain fundamental elements that stand in the way of the modernization of Muslim countries: limitations on the rights of the individual, on women's rights, and on the freedoms of thought and of expression.
In order to locate the causes for the specific directions that Muslims chose, she harks back 14 centuries to the gross inequities of the pre-Islamic period in Arabia (jahiliyya). A vital part of the religion's social contract, according to Mernissi, was the surrender of freedom in exchange for peace.

Renouncing freedom of thought and subordinating oneself to the group is the pact that will lead to peace; salam will be instituted if the individual agrees to sacrifice his individualism. Hawa means both "desire" and "passion," but it can also signify "personal opinion." It is the unbridled individual interest of a person who forgets the existence of others in thinking only of his own advantage. Desire, which is individual by definition, is the opposite of rahma, which is an intense sensitivity for the other, for all the others, for the group. (1992: 89)

This was a solution to the social chaos resulting from the virtually unrestrained freedom enjoyed in Arab society during the jahiliyya. The prophet Muhammad asked Arabs to give up this "arrogant individualism" for the ideal of equality:

"Along with peace, salam, it is the absolute equality of all, men and women, masters and slaves, Arabs and non-Arabs, which Islam guarantees, in exchange for the surrender of individualism" (110).

Despite this institution of equality, restrictions were placed on women in the centuries following the demise of the Prophet. Mernissi gives an intriguing explanation, drawing on myth, history and social psychology. She draws attention to the practice of infanticide carried out in pre-Islamic Arabia at the behest of the female deity Al-Uzza. The Koran prohibited this and other rituals of the polytheistic religion; but Mernissi argues that the linkage of the female with heinous violence has remained latent in the Muslim unconscious for 14 centuries.
Woman would be the equal of man in all domains of Islam, since she was also a believer and endowed with reason and will; but she was henceforward to be invisible in the political sphere. In the palace of the caliph she had her place - behind the hijab, in the harem - the "forbidden space." Her space had to be separated from violence. Women must never have access to that which kills and introduces disorder: the power to govern the city, which was steeped in blood during the reign of al-‘Uzza, Manat and al-Lat [the three primary pre-Islamic Arabian goddesses]. (126)

Nevertheless, increasing numbers of contemporary Muslim women, like many other women around the world, have been asking for a place in all spheres of the modern state.

Given the strong ideological forces arrayed against women in some Muslim countries, it is easy to assume that no advancement is taking place behind the hijab. There is a continual stream of reporting in the Northern mass media which focuses on the restrictions against Muslim women, but few journalists have attempted to analyze the other side of the picture. "In 1987, 50 percent of all medical students in Tunisia were women, 37 percent in Syria, and 30 percent in Algeria" (Mernissi, 1992: 159). 1986 statistics for female university professors were: Iran, 19 percent; Egypt, 28 percent; and, perhaps most surprisingly, Saudi Arabia, 32 percent (although most likely in segregated classes for women). Compare this with: Japan, 10 percent in 1987; West Germany, 17 percent in 1986; France, 23 percent in 1987; United States, 24 percent in 1980 (157-62). Pakistan, Bangladesh and Turkey have chosen women as prime ministers; among the G-7 countries, only Britain has elected a female leader.² In order to provide informed, comprehensive coverage on the Muslim woman, Northern discourses have to take
account of these remarkable achievements - which are taking place despite the patriarchal manipulation of the Shariah. The hijab is not always an obstacle against career advancement; indeed, in some cases Muslim women have found that, along with education, wearing this "Islamic" apparel leads to increased mobility in society and the workplace (Mule and Barthel, 1992).

Nevertheless, the Muslim female remains under the constant threat of having her limited privileges revoked by conservative regimes. Ironically, it is the unremitting panoptic gaze of the Northern powers that is one of the strongest argument of Muslim conservatives against the establishment of greater freedoms for the individual, women, and minority groups: "when the enemy satellites are keeping watch, it is not the moment to wallow in one's individuality" (Mernissi, 1992: 91). This is the same collective "enemy" that brutally colonized Muslim lands and still launches attacks against them. Intense feelings of vulnerability, indeed nakedness, in the face of Northern cultural, economic and military intrusions are a factor in the unwillingness even to explore the issue of rights. The wagons also remain circled against the relentless attacks in the international media; what is perceived as the latter's siege against "Islam" gives the elites of conservative regimes the excuse to sustain and even strengthen societal restrictions. Northern observers are generally oblivious to, or perhaps choose to ignore, the consequences of their constant, collective gaze upon the Muslim object - which, despite its omnipresence, serves to mystify rather than enlighten.
The status of ethnic, cultural and religious minorities in a number of Muslim societies has failed to conform to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. East Timorese in Indonesia, Kurds in Turkey and Iraq, Bahais in Iran, and Ahmadies in Pakistan have been officially persecuted, while Muslim and non-Muslim minorities have suffered physical attacks in Egypt, Algeria and Saudi Arabia. These actions make a mockery of the status of *dhimmi*, protected peoples, which gave Jews and Christians certain freedoms to practice their religions and run their own institutions. Much work needs to be done to enhance human rights in Muslims societies; but it is intellectually dishonest to expect stringent application of standards developed primarily according to dominant Northern discourses and which are subject to political manipulation even in the democratic West. The Muslim *Ummah*, currently in its 15th century, is undergoing a period of collective soul-searching reminiscent of Western Christendom during its Middle Ages. However, the crisis for Muslims is rendered even more acute because contemporary technological discourses are culturally alien to them, whereas the Renaissance and the Reformation were indigenous developments in Europe. While journalists need necessarily to continue reporting on corruption and human rights abuses wherever they exist, a comprehensive approach requires that they be aware of the historical and socio-cultural backgrounds of the societies they cover.

The generalization and dichotomization of all Muslims as "fundamentalists" and "moderates," "traditionalists" and "modernists," "fanatics" and "secularists" serves to distort communication. It makes a number of the
Muslims who are interested in constructive dialogue with non-Muslims apologetic about their beliefs or, contrarily, disdainful about any interaction. The outside observer needs to understand, first of all, that beyond the agreement on the fundamentals of Islam, there is vast diversity among its one billion adherents living not only in their ancestral lands from Senegal to Mindanao, but also as immigrants in Northern societies from California to Sweden to New Zealand. Even among those referred to as "fundamentalists" there is a wide divergence of opinion about the parameters of "true Islam" and the ways of adhering to it. The Northern mass media have the tendency to declare manifestations of Muslim belief such as the call for decency in films, wearing the hijab, or even performing the Muslim prayer as certain signs of "Islamic fundamentalism," when petitions for the banning of violence in children's television programs, the wearing of Christian religious apparel, or attending Church in their own countries are generally not considered out of the ordinary in the North. John Esposito urges that we should move beyond facile stereotypes and ready-made images and answers. Just as simply perceiving the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe through the prism of the "evil empire" had its costs, so too the tendency of American administrations and the media to equate Islam and Islamic activism with Qaddafi/Khomeini and thus with radicalism, terrorism and anti-Americanism has seriously hampered our understanding and conditioned our responses... The challenge today is to appreciate the diversity of Islamic actors and movements, to ascertain the reasons behind confrontations and conflicts, and thus to react to specific events and situations with informed, reasoned responses rather than pre-determined presumptions and reactions. (1993: 169)
While certain elements among Muslims do indeed pose a threat to Northern interests, to see all practising Muslims as constituting a collective peril makes the locus of the actual danger difficult to locate. It also inhibits the development of a genuine dialogue between Northern and Muslim societies.

**Other ways of telling**

Discourses supporting the "New World Order" have sought to sustain Northern hegemony in the reconfigured international political scene. Where there had generally been the suppression of all interests in favour of the two warring camps during the Cold War, there is now an apparent attempt at regimentation into just one monolithic global order. The primary myth of Science, underlying the myth of the Nation, remains the dominant frame - promising the ever greater perfection of society until the millennial arrival of world-wide utopia. According to Vaclav Havel,

> We treat the fatal consequences of technology as though they were a technical defect that could be remedied by technology alone. We are looking for an objective way out of the crisis of objectivism ... What is needed is something different, something larger. Man's attitude to the world must be radically changed. We have to abandon the arrogant belief that the world is merely a puzzle to be solved, a machine with instructions for use waiting to be discovered, a body of information to be fed into a computer in the hope that, sooner or later, it will spit out the solution. 

The mass media, adhering to dominant technological discourses, tend largely to support the *status quo*. Post-Cold War constructions of global relationships privilege Northern elite voices over others. Our rationalist, scientific, modern
civilization - now reunited with the Eastern European prodigal - will forge ahead and lead the nations of the world along the electronic superhighway to the earthly paradise of the Global Information Society. But the murmurs of dissent continue to grow louder.

Just as it seems that the world will be organized under a unitary post-imperial "New World Order," there has emerged a profusion of challenges. The post-feminist, post-modernist, post-colonial and other dissenting movements of the marginalized in the South and the North speaking against the hegemony of dominant discourses have inspired the search for alternative discourses. Several suggestions have been made for more informed and more authentic ways of depicting the Other. Representations that have reduced a multitude of life experiences to stereotypical portrayals of "immigrant," "Third World," "Black," "Oriental," "Arab," "Muslim," or "Islamic fundamentalist" can be liberated through open-ended, polyvalent narratives.

... to see Others not as ontologically given but as historically constituted would be to erode the exclusivist biases we so often ascribe to cultures, our own not least. Cultures may then be represented as zones of control or of abandonment, of recollection and of forgetting, of force or of dependence, of exclusiveness or of sharing, all taking place in the global history that is our element. Exile, immigration, and the crossing of boundaries are experiences that can therefore provide us with new narrative forms or, in John Berger's phrase, with other ways of telling. (Said, 1989: 225)

The challenge for journalists is to learn from contemporary social science and cultural studies' attempts at "other ways of telling." Revealing the historicity of the cultures they report on helps to mitigate the essentialist approach that reduces a
multivariant reality to a caricature. Integrating "feminist critiques of conventional IR [international relations] scholarship - which uncover local, regional, and global gender arrangements that underlie complex relationships between nations and within people - with different detailed examples of Middle Eastern women's life experiences, resistance struggles, and solidarities that transcend sovereign boundaries" will also aid in this process (Sharoni, 1993: 23). Dominant feminist discourses in the North would also, of course, have to learn to account for the cultural specificity of individual Muslim and other Southern societies.

Abdul J. JanMohamed proposes a definition for "the specular border intellectual" who "must affirm the value of infidelity to cultures, nations, groups, institutions, etc. to the extent that these are defined in monologic, essentialist terms" (1992: 117). Such an individual "caught between two cultures ... subjects the cultures to analytic scrutiny rather than combining them" (97). S/he is at home in her/his homelessness, using the vantage point thus enjoyed to view horizons difficult for others to envision. Benjamin Weir, who was held in captivity by an Islamist group in Lebanon, seems to have become such an individual in seeking to understand his captors, despite his suffering at their hands:

I reflect on their self- and group-perception neither to justify nor to approve, but to describe. In fact, I deeply resented what they were doing to me. They prevented my freedom. They were a physical and psychological threat to me. They caused distress to my family. They caused fear to my colleagues. They upset the scheme of life, and they shook the foundations of what social order was still left in Beirut. Their violence had already caused, before my capture, great loss of life and severe destruction at the U.S. Embassy and the Marine base. None of this could I excuse. Obviously I could not
trust them. But still it was important to me to try to understand them. That understanding came to me very slowly, bit by bit, over sixteen months of my captivity. (1987: 155)

It appears that under such circumstances the task of the border specular intellectual is little short of heroic, but apparently not impossible. (According to the primary myth of History, the hero temporarily leaves her/his community and returns with an enhanced perspective that s/he shares with others.) The foreign correspondent, by learning to question the essentialist bases of her/his own socialization could genuinely begin to understand the people s/he is covering (but, as Weir indicates, understanding does not necessarily mean agreeing with them). The ideal of a specular border journalism has the potential for providing genuinely global narratives that are not monolithic but pluralist, in which cultures are not arranged hierarchically.

Contemporary approaches of conflict resolution suggest the importance of understanding symbols and symbolic behaviour (rituals) on the part of disputing parties (Smith, 1989; Cohen and Arnone, 1988). More than statistics, "facts" or detailed descriptions of events, the symbolic subtexts of human interactions modulated by culture and psychology should be among the primary foci of interest for observers. Symbols and rituals help establish power, and are key to interpreting gestures of peace-making, forgiveness and harmonious co-existence. Underlying symbols and rituals is myth: according to Mohammed Arkoun, "Myth is the centre of human existence and the key to all our discussions, whether we are architects, philosophers, writers, or artists" (Salam, 1991: 44). It is equally
important for journalists as observers of the human condition to be cognizant of the place of myth and symbols. The mythical significance of Jerusalem, for example, is key to understanding the contemporary relations not only between Palestinians and Israelis but also between Muslims, Christians and Jews. Media references to "the Temple Mount" rather than "Haram al-Shareef" privileges the Jewish perspective and history over the Muslim. (Arkoun has argued for a better appreciation of "the radical imaginary common to the societies of the Book/books," namely, Jews, Christians and Muslims. Similarly, the use of "the Yom Kippur War" instead of "the Ramadan War" or even the neutral "October War" makes it appear that journalists are untrue to their vaunted claim of objectivity. As cultural practitioners themselves, they encode their work into dramaturgical scenarios that accord the roles of hero, villain and victim to specific types of actors. In dominant media dramaturgies, the Muslim generally appears as the villain and sometimes as a helpless victim, but rarely a hero. This role usually goes to the Northern male.

One of the most significant barriers facing the development of informed reportage about "Islam" is the lack of knowledge and unease among many Northern journalists about religion in general. Henry A. Grunwald, a former editor-in-chief of Time, arguing for the need for a "new journalism" in the post-Cold War era, noted:

Crucial among the newer topics journalism must address are tribalism and ethnic self-assertion, phenomena about which social scientists, let alone reporters, know little; likewise with religion, a
subject most journalists have found unsettling ever since it wandered from the Sunday religion pages to the front page. Religious wars, large and small, seem increasingly likely in the decades ahead. *Time* magazine recently tied together in one cover package the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York City by Muslim fundamentalists, the siege in Texas of a group of cultists whose leader apparently thought he was a messiah, and the conflict between Muslims and Christians in Bosnia. This link was legitimate but frail, because these were very different manifestations of "religion." Not every Muslim fundamentalist wants to blow up New York City, and few Christian fundamentalists belong to cults ready for Armageddon. The press must discuss such distinctions knowledgeably and conscientiously. (1993: 14-15)

Unfortunately, such journalistic hindsight about "religious wars" seems to occur usually after considerable damage has already been done by dominant discourses. The institutional response of the mass media to a "crisis" is usually to react first, using clichés and stereotypes in almost unrestrained manners, and then to reflect upon the situation. New information is routinely placed within dominant cognitive models. (My own experience as a former journalist has shown me how the structural constraints, like the deadline, the worldview of the gatekeeper, and desire to have one's work published, makes one adherent to dominant models of particular situations.)

Deviant faith frequently becomes the focus for reporters not familiar with issues of spirituality. NBC's former bureau chief in Cairo, S. Abdullah Schleifer, remarked that peaceful religious events are usually disregarded by the foreign press.

Somehow religion only comes alive as a story when somebody is getting insulted or killed.
Most of us in the foreign press corps are far more at ease socially and intellectually with the secular left in the Arab and Islamic world, despite the left’s aggressive political anti-Americanism, than we are with the usually moderate Islamic religious establishment or with the more militant, fundamentalist or populist Islamic movements. And most of us practice a form of reverse secularism. For if secularism insists that religion has nothing to do with the political domain, the reverse-secularism of American journalism insists that religion is worthy of reporting only in the political domain, and the more violent or heterodox the domain, the better. (1985: 9)

Most Northern journalists covering Muslim societies are largely unfamiliar not only with the subtleties of the contemporary religious debates but also with the primary beliefs and practices of their members. The practice of Sufism, popular in virtually all Muslims societies and which also more fully expresses its humanistic side in its aspirations for universal fellowship, goes almost unacknowledged in the news media.  

The failure of Northern observers to realize the impending fall of the Shah of Iran in 1979 was largely due to their ignorance about the extent of the populist outrage against the monarch, that had successfully been harnessed by the religious leadership for its own purposes. Hamid Mowlana has revealed how the mass media, which had largely lost credibility among the public, were circumvented by traditional means of communication linked to religious institutions (1979: 107-12). This remarkable underground network was virtually invisible to Northern journalists who were enamoured with the Shah’s much-touted modernization policies, that in reality had left large numbers of Iranians dispossessed and alienated. In a study on the mass media’s coverage of the Iranian hostage situation
(1979-81), Mowlana considers alternative modes of reporting in a conflict situation (1984: 94-95). He holds that the mass media should have attempted to assist in the resolution of the Iranian hostage crisis rather than inflame passions on both sides with their reporting.

Perhaps the greatest potential contribution of mass communication to peaceful conflict resolution is in the media's ability to influence the moods of government, elites, and the public. It is ironic that the trait of the media that perhaps has done the greatest damage also has the potential for doing the greatest good. The "mood" of the hostage conflict might be characterized, depending on one's perspective, as fanatic, religious intransigence from Iran leading to national frustration in the United States, or as cultural domination of Iran with material and tacit support of oppression by the United States, culminating in the taking of the hostages as a gesture of rebellion against the United States and an international plea for justice for Iran. (Ibid)

Instead of contributing to a "crisis' mood," Mowlana suggests that the Northern media could help to create non-conflictual attitudes in periods of moderate stress. An exploration of "universal concepts of religious, ideological, or traditional values should be used to bridge the existing cultural communication gap. The common aspects of life that unite rather than divide could be emphasized" (94).

Upon surveying the political, economic, cultural, technological, legal and professional aspects of international information flows in his Global Information and World Communication: New Frontiers in International Relations, Mowlana proposes four communication principles to help enhance inter-group understanding:

• prevention of war and promotion of peace;
such an ethical approach would guide communication workers in furthering the audience's insight into a particular situation by exploring factors that go beyond the merely political and economic realities. This dissertation has sought to demonstrate the falsity of the much-touted claim of journalistic "objectivity." In upholding a truly universal set of values, Mowlana's humanistic principles could help counter the biases that all communicators bring with them from their respective cultures.

Beyond the economic, cultural and military humiliations suffered by the Muslim at the hands of dominant Northern powers, one has to acknowledge the violence done to her/his spirit. The extreme reactions of some dispossessed Muslims to Northern interests cannot be explored without taking into account the spiritual dimensions of the conflict. Such an analysis is attempted of the Iranian hostage-takings (1979-81) by Robin Woodsworth Carlsen:

If we considered some of these points: the context within which the Iranian action has taken place, the perception they have of the foundation of our policies, the interpretation they must give to the kind of reaction we have had to this confrontation, we might realize another level of approach, another level of understanding, one that would enable us to transcend the disastrously narrow basis of our present attitude... the Iranians would believe they would be doing an injustice to us if they gave in to our demands, i.e. released the hostages under the terms the U.S. has demanded. For the
Iranians believe the world is caught in the most tragic spiritual condition, that is, through this drama that the potency, the beauty, the resoluteness of the religious consciousness will be revealed, [and] the bankruptcy - morally, spiritually - of the purely secular, realpolitik conditioned view of the world will be exposed. (1979: 40)

The intrusions of the values and commodities emanating from a secularist, empiricist and rationalistic civilization, have assailed the worldviews of Muslims in profound manners. While many do not understand the bewilderment they experience, they do sense that their fundamental senses of right and wrong are being violated. Observers of these tragedies cannot divorce the subsequent reactions - some of which are violent - from their causes. Carlsen's approach, in attempting to communicate at the level of the human spirit and of universally acknowledged values, brings to light a plea for justice on the part of the Iranian dispossessed. Carlsen also carries out moral, political, psychological and aesthetic analyses. Such a multi-faceted (although not completely comprehensive) scrutiny should not excuse or justify atrocities carried out by "Islamic fundamentalists," but it helps in bringing to light some underlying causes.

Despite Edward Said's own disposition towards "secular criticism," he is appreciative of the approach of Louis Massignon (a "specular border intellectual" according to JanMohamed) to "Islam." A devout Catholic and scholar of religion, he strived to understand the spiritual universals that underlay the faith and practices of Christians and Muslims. Said notes in Massignon's work the notion of distance that kept Christianity and "Islam" distinct, without the attempt to assert
one's own religious or cultural background as hegemonic: "the religion [Islam] attracted and yet resisted the Christian in him, although - and here is the man's extraordinary stroke of genius - he conceived his own philological work as a science of compassion, as providing a place for Islam and Christianity to approach and substitute for each other, yet always remaining apart, one always substituting for the other" (Said, 1983: 285). For Massignon, "language is both a 'pilgrimage' and 'spiritual displacement'" which enabled his non-hegemonic narrative. Despite some shortcomings of Massignon's experiment, the contemporary journalist would do well to learn from it.

The secularist outlook militates against a full understanding of the spiritual impulses of human beings, which can be expressed not only through religious ritual but also in other aspects of life. Jacques Ellul has argued that it is the fundamental human attraction to totalizing worldviews providing answers to all questions, that makes the modern secularist individual - who has given up religious belief - responsive to the technological myths couched in contemporary propaganda (1969: 251). As a way to better understand this, Aziz Esmail - speaking at the above-mentioned Indonesian conference - suggested a wider humanistic discourse that would integrate an understanding of the material and the spiritual aspects of life.

This means transcending our present compartmentalization of knowledge into discrete techniques and disciplines. Let me emphasize here that I am arguing for something deeper, something more basic, than what is nowadays called an "interdisciplinary" approach. The task is not simply to make the "disciplines" blend
together into what would merely be an intellectual cocktail mixture. It is, rather, to explore the human foundations in their unity, in a state logically prior to, and transcending, the division of the human project into separate arts, crafts, and sciences. The ultimate aim, in this as in other areas, should be to reconnect knowledge to the human person, for man stands at the point of intersection between technique and spirituality. (Salam, 1991: 27)

In this, Esmail envisions the disintegration of the dichotomies that have separated religion from humanism and tradition from modernity. Technique, rather than alienating the individual through its obeisance to rationalism (cf. Ellul, 1964), can be vitalized by responding to the innermost aspirations of human beings.

The discourses of journalism are primarily rationalistic and tend to devalue those actions and events that cannot be explained by "the logic of the concrete" (Tuchman, 1981: 90) deriving from dominant political or economic theories; they thus generally disregard the non-rationalist expressions of the human spirit. Quite apart from religious motivations, all human beings carry out actions whose causes have little to do with the rational faculty. Compassion, love, devotion, faith, loyalty, honour, pride, ambition, guilt, jealousy, fear, anger, hate, and revenge are among the most powerful "positive" and "negative" impulses, driving people to behave in manners that rationalism fails to inspire. Indeed, skilful propagandists, along with providing "facts," expertly manipulate these emotions to move individuals and groups to action. Jacques Ellul has shown how propaganda couches information within myth, which has the power to evoke strong feelings even in the secularist individual. The use of archetypal symbols in myths facilitates such communication, persuading people to participate in contemporary
rituals of mass political activity - which Ellul says are akin to religious rituals. If journalists do not understand these fundamental workings of human communication, they fail to comprehend the non-rationalism of much of social, political and economic behaviour as well as the roots of truly universal values. As a result they tend to attribute actions they do not understand to "the bizarre," "the strange," "barbarism," "fanaticism," or "fundamentalism." The reaction to the structural violence of the rationalist discourses which deny what Johann Galtung calls the "higher needs" of human beings is sometimes direct, physical violence. Understanding the dynamics of power and violence in the relationship between Northern and Muslim societies necessarily involves an appreciation of the continual assault by the dominant discourses of technological society on the spiritual as well as the rational sensibilities of people in these societies.

Closing

Whereas dominant media discourses fail to grant religious motivations the legitimacy they normally accord to politically and economically-inspired actions, hundreds of millions of people around the world continue to be moved to action by religious faith. International coverage of Muslim societies, where there are growing demands for the reintroduction of religious values in mechanics of the state, tends to be particularly hostile. While some discourses do attempt to impart alternative views of these societies, much of the mainstream reporting is laden with stereotypical and hackneyed references as demonstrated in this dissertation.
"Islam" becomes a composite entity, with little distinction made between its diverse followers and their respective beliefs, cultures, and actions. Since exploding a bomb in a crowded market is portrayed as being "Islamic," then the act of the Islamic prayer becomes evidence of radical militancy. Time and space lose all meaning when talking about this "Islam" - ideological genealogies of "Islamic terrorists" going all the way back to the time of the prophet Muhammad are drawn up by Orientalists and reproduced by the mass media. Indeed, Muhammad became the epitome of violence, lust, greed and barbarism - the core images that have recurred in Northern imaginaries about Muslims. Such essentialist views of the adherents of the religion reinforce the idea that they are inherently unable to rise above their savage state.

These stereotypes are manipulated by propagandists, especially in times of crisis. The present study has shown how, in the times of conflict, Northern propagandists have highlighted medieval images of Muslims as being essentially violent and barbaric. The hijacking of an American airliner by a group of Lebanese Muslims became "Islamic terrorism," the kidnapping of several Western men in Beirut came to define the entire historical phenomenon of hostage-taking, the territorial war between Azeris and Armenians was framed as "Islam versus Christianity," the guilt of the Nazi Holocaust against European Jewry was transposed onto the Arabs in conflict with Israel, Saddam Hussein in the guise of the Muslim despot became the contemporary Hitler waging war against "the Allies," and the object of "containment" is shifted from the communist East to the
Muslim East. Our "just wars" are based on Judeo-Christian ethical/moral principles and abide by international law, but their jihad is an expression of barbarism. Such discourses, facilitated by the historical resiliency of core Northern images about Muslims, appear to have allowed some Serb leaders to construct Bosnian Muslims as fanatical fundamentalists in order to motivate their followers to carry out "ethnic cleansing." The dominant portrayal of Muslims as villains who victimize Christians and Jews also seemed to have made Northern public opinion and governments slow in dealing with the Christian Serb rebels.

Instead of the world-wide religion of some one billion people (many of whom see their religion as a guide to harmonious existence with their fellow human beings) "Islam" has been named in dominant Northern discourses as a source of global instability. In this it is reduced to the interpretation favoured by the most militant of its followers. Such engineering of consensus regarding "Islam" as a public problem, has assigned some modernist governments in Muslim countries as well as those in Northern ones to deal with it. Undemocratic regimes in Muslim societies have generally tended to exploit "Islamic" symbols to buttress their own power bases, thus further alienating those who are vulnerable to Islamist propaganda. There has been little initiative to come genuinely to terms with the issues of modernity within indigenous Muslim contexts, or to broach what Mohammed Arkoun has termed the "unthinkable" by going beyond a closed-minded dogmatism. While there have been some isolated attempts by Northern governments to understand "Islam" better, the response has generally been to
control what is seen as a source of conflict and terrorism. There appears to be a sustained trend among Northern integration propagandists to institutionalize the view of "Islam" as one of the most destabilizing influences in the contemporary world. This view dehistoricizes the relationships between Northern and Muslim societies, erasing the memory of the colonial era in which indigenous socio-economic structures were destroyed and replaced with a global system that favours the North.

The "clash of civilizations" thesis posits "Islam" as a major threat to Western civilization. Instead of searching for ways to resolve this perceived conflict it incites Northern governments to adopt a more aggressive stance towards Muslim countries. And like a self-fulfilling prophecy, the "clash" between the two becomes more likely as their respective agendas are determined by the militant elements among them. As the dispossessed among Muslim populations come increasingly to suffer under the structural violence of Northern-dominated global structures, the likelihood that they will respond with direct violence will grow. As this "Islamic peril" begins to threaten Northern structures of power, there will be more deployment of Northern military power in Muslim societies and arming of client regimes. Sadly, this process is already under way in countries such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Its outcome in Iran was the overthrow of the Shah - a favourite of Washington - and the installation of a mullah-led government. Several other Muslim countries are facing various levels of militancy from Islamist groups and may be headed towards similar futures. The likelihood of these tendencies will
probably be enhanced by Northern provocations arising from Bible-based
predictions of Armageddon-like confrontations at the end of the current
millennium.

Dominant media discourses appear to be echoing rather than challenging
the "clash of civilizations" thesis and the belligerency it proposes. The influence
of Northern-based mass media in global image and decision-making is well-
established. Their world-wide reach and the dependence of media institutions in
virtually all countries on them for news ensures that their stereotypes about
Muslims are disseminated much more extensively and intensively around the
world than the stereotypes that Muslims have about Northerners.

Certain journalists, having read critiques such as those by Edward Said,
have genuinely attempted to provide more responsible coverage. Some Northern-
based mass media have also been instrumental in uncovering corruption and
human rights abuses in Muslim and other Southern societies. However, the
generally negative and sometimes ideologically hostile approach of Northern
discourses makes it easy for perpetrators of these crimes to dismiss such coverage
as more anti-Islamic propaganda. An enhanced reputation for ethical and
conscientious journalism would make it less easy to dismiss. Some Northern
journalists are coming to agree that they can play a role in defusing tense
situations or at least in not contributing to their exacerbation. The call by the
former editor-in-chief of Time magazine for a knowledgeable and conscientious
journalism is an admission that reporters have often been neither. But it is also a
recognition that the media have a place in not only acting as mediators of messages but also in the process of enhancing inter-cultural, international communication. The role of the increasing number of Southern journalists who work for Northern-based media can be vital in this respect. Increased collaboration between media institutions in the North and the South could also be beneficial to both.

Conscientious journalism comes from the acknowledgement of media professionals' responsibility for the effects of their work on society. News workers cannot pretend that their claim to objectivity insulates them from criticism of bias. While it is humanly impossible to be completely objective, one can attempt to recognize the personal and cultural biases for or against the people one reports about. The media professional who seeks to be informed necessarily starts with the Self. Through an initial inquiry into what the collective Self knows about the Other and also how this knowledge was acquired, one learns to free oneself from the constraints of hackneyed constructions and to produce more authentic reporting. Recognition of the processes by which knowledge is constructed and how societal consensus about this knowledge is engineered is vital for the journalist. Beyond just understanding the bases of the "facts" at hand, this often involves the deconstruction of fundamental issues such as violence, peace, the nation-state, democracy, science etc. - a process that has become, to borrow a phrase from Arkoun, the "unthinkable" in dominant technological discourses.
Taking account of the continual dialectic between different points of view that challenge each other would enable the journalist to avoid entrapment into hegemonic interpretations. However, this process would not restrict itself to just two opposing points of view but leave open her/his reporting to a multi-faceted reality. It would not dismiss alternative discourses but introduce them as legitimate expressions of the subjects. The rational, the emotional and the spiritual would all enrich this form of reporting, to which the journalist would bring her/his own knowledge, experience, instinct and conscience. It is this kind of revitalized journalism that will help us better comprehend the nature of truly universal values and contemporary issues such as the "Islamic peril." Just as importantly, it can also enhance Muslim understanding of Northern societies.

Notes

1. I would like to attribute the origins of some of these ideas to the "The Media and Ethnicity" symposium at Mississauga, Ontario, organized by the International Communication Forum and the Canadian Journalism Foundation (April 21-23, 1995) and the "Reporting Diversity" workshop in Ottawa organized by Carleton University's School of Journalism and the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews (June 2-3, 1995), both of which were attended by working journalists from a variety of backgrounds.

2. Whereas Kim Campbell succeeded Brian Mulroney when he resigned as the Canadian prime minister in 1993, she failed to return to this position in a subsequent election.

3. For example, the "Life" section of the July 8, 1995 edition of The Toronto Star had a story on its section front on the conflict in Egypt between cinema owners who displayed sexually provocative billboards and those who objected to them: the latter were placed in the "fundamentalist" camp. This contrasted with the ways in which ethical, moral and religious issues were dealt with in the rest of the section. Page 3 had an advice column on the top of the broadsheet with the headline "Why does filthy language have to pollute our air?" The reader was complaining about the use of swear words in daily conversation. "Miss Manners" gave tips on how to deal with the problem, without marginalizing the concern. The headline on the top of the ninth page read, "Marketing distorts society, book says". The article was about the commercialization of North American society through the proliferation of advertising messages; this was also treated as a legitimate concern by the staff reporter. The longest article on Page 14, the Religion page, was headlined, "Getting into the spirit of God" and was about
the popularity of the Airport Vineyard Christian Church in Toronto. Page 16 carried a short story titled "Crime Doesn't Pay." Thus it appears that whereas the ethical, moral and religious concerns of certain Canadians were treated with respect by the newspaper, those of some Egyptians were considered deviant.

4. Quoted in Gusterson (1993: 300) from Havel’s "The End of the Modern Era."

5. Also see Bhabha’s discussions about the exchanges between cultures occurring at the “interstices” between them (1994).

6. Arkoun uses the following definition from Cornelius Castoriadis: “To the extent that the imaginary ultimately stems from the orinary [sic] faculty of positing or presenting oneself with things and relations that do not exist, in the form of representation (things and relations that are not or have never been given in perception), we shall speak of a final or radical imaginary as the common root of the actual imaginary and of the symbolic. This is finally the elementary and irreducible capacity of evoking images” (Castoriadis, 1987: 127). For a discussion of the fundamental commonalities between the Jewish, Christian and Muslim traditions, see Arkoun’s "The Notion of Revelation: From Ahl al-Kitab to the Societies of the Book" (1988a); also see Ayoub (1989: 42-45).

7. Discomfort with issues of religion is compounded by dominant discourses which hold secularism and spirituality to be diametrically opposed to each other. Even Edward Said (1983), in the very effort to extirpate ideological dichotomies, paradoxically pits “secular criticism” (based on a neutral, rational and detached approach) against “religious criticism” (appealing to magic, divine ordinance or sacred texts). Also see note 12.

8. As noted above in the example of Benjamin Weir, who has served as the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, it appears that journalists, perhaps due to their failure to understand spiritual issues in general, lag behind some religious leaders in shedding their ethnocentric views. Pakistani Christian theologian Charles Amjad-Ali states, “What we are facing today is a renewed demand for a vigorous dialogue which acknowledges the religio-cultural heritage of others as posing not so much a threat but a challenge to relook at our own history anew. This forces us to relook at the religio-cultural reality within our own socio-political and philosophical foundations rather than to succumb to a shallow confession of some undecipherable concept of secularism” (1990: 47).

9. Homi Bhabha, citing Walter Benjamin, highlights the issue the "untranslatability" of cultures: "The 'foreignness' of languages is the nucleus of the untranslatable that goes beyond the transferal of subject matter between cultural texts or practices. The transfer of meaning can never be total between systems of meaning, or within them, for the language of translation envelops its content like a royal robe with ample folds ... [it] signifies a more exalted language than its own and thus remains unsuited to its content, overpowering and alien" (1994: 163).


12. "Secularism/secularist" is not meant here in the sense of the separation of Church and State, but what Aziz Esmail refers to as "the strong sense of the term" (he calls Church-State separation "secular thinking" as opposed to secularism): "Secularism in the strong sense of the term has the characteristics of an ideology, treating religion as a rival to itself, and attempting to offer a total explanation of its own... A truly secular viewpoint, honest with itself, must refrain from replicating what after all is one of the essential traits of religion, the drive for an all-inclusive view of the world. But the secular
rejection of total explanations - which always go beyond what is known to date, and what can reasonably be known about the future, to what really is in the nature of a mystery, and, hence, more properly the object of faith rather than scientific knowledge - tends to lapse into ideological secularism. It then smuggles the kind of eschatological, or utopian, imagination that is characteristic of religion into its own system. In short, it turns into a faith, but a faith that adopts a secular disguise” (Salam, 1991: 24). For a survey of several meanings of secularism, see Hill, (1973: 228-51).

13. While rationalist explanations may be routinely devised for upheavals in domestic political machines and stock markets, there appears little willingness to seek such interpretations of events in Muslim and other Southern societies. And whereas the characteristics of mainstream Christian and Jewish groups may even be accorded respectability in dominant discourses, the practices of long-established Muslim sects are frequently described as being cult-like.
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