### Chilling Effect

#### The NDAA created a chilling effect where the legal protections for those who dissent against the state are uncertain

Hedges 12 (Chris, Pulitizer Prize winner, author, reporter, Truth Dig, Chris Hedges | Totalitarian Systems Always Begin by Rewriting the Law, http://truth-out.org/opinion/item/8095-chris-hedges-|-totalitarian-systems-always-begin-by-rewriting-the-law, 3/26/12)

It is in conference rooms like this one, where attorneys speak in the arcane and formal language of legal statutes, that we lose or save our civil liberties. The 2001 Authorization to Use Military Force Act, the employment of the Espionage Act by the Obama White House against six suspected whistle-blowers and leakers, and the Homeland Battlefield Bill have crippled the work of investigative reporters in every major newsroom in the country. Government sources that once provided information to counter official narratives and lies have largely severed contact with the press. They are acutely aware that there is no longer any legal protection for those who dissent or who expose the crimes of state. The NDAA threw in a new and dangerous component that permits the government not only to silence journalists but imprison them and deny them due process because they "substantially supported" terrorist groups or "associated forces." Those of us who reach out to groups opposed to the U.S. in order to explain them to the American public will not be differentiated from terrorists under this law. I know how vicious the government can be when it feels challenged by the press. I covered the wars in El Salvador and Nicaragua from 1983 to 1988. Press members who reported on the massacres and atrocities committed by the Salvadoran military, as well as atrocities committed by the U.S.-backed Contra forces in Nicaragua, were repeatedly denounced by senior officials in the Reagan administration as fellow travelers and supporters of El Salvador's Farabundo Marti National Liberation (FMLN) rebels or the leftist Sandinista government in Managua, Nicaragua. The Reagan White House, in one example, set up an internal program to distort information and intimidate and attack those of us in the region who wrote articles that countered the official narrative. The program was called "public diplomacy." [Walter Raymond Jr.](http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/JFKraymondW.htm), a veteran CIA propagandist, ran it. The goal of the program was to manage "perceptions" about the wars in Central America among the public. That management included aggressive efforts to destroy the careers of reporters who were not compliant by branding them as communists or communist sympathizers. If the power to lock us up indefinitely without legal representation had been in the hands of Elliott Abrams or [Oliver North](http://www.biography.com/people/oliver-north-9425102) or Raymond, he surely would have used it. Little has changed. On returning not long after 9/11 from a speaking engagement in Italy I was refused entry into the United States by customs officials at the Newark, N.J., airport. I was escorted to a room filled with foreign nationals. I was told to wait. A supervisor came into the room an hour later. He leaned over the shoulder of the official seated at a computer in front of me. He said to this official: "He is on a watch. Tell him he can go." When I asked for further information I was told no one was authorized to speak to me. I was handed my passport and told to leave the airport. Glenn Greenwald, the columnist and constitutional lawyer, has done the most detailed analysis of the NDAA bill. He has pointed out that the crucial phrases are "substantially supported" and "associated forces." These two phrases, he writes, allow the government to expand the definition of terrorism to include groups that were not involved in the 9/11 attacks and may not have existed when those attacks took place. It is worth reading Sections 1021 and 1022 of the bill. Section 1021 of the NDAA "includes the authority for the Armed Forces of the United States to detain covered persons (as defined in subsection (b)) pending disposition under the law of war." Subsection B defines covered persons like this: "(b) Covered Persons—A covered person under this section is any person as follows: (1) A person who planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored those responsible for those attacks. (2) A person who was a part of or substantially supported Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, or associated forces that are engaged in hostilities against the U.S. or its coalition partners." Section 1022, Subsection C, goes on to declare that covered persons are subject to: "(1) Detention under the law of war without trial until the end of the hostilities authorized by the Authorization for Use of Military Force." And Section 1022, Subsection A, Item 4, allows the president to waive the requirement of legal evidence in order to condemn a person as an enemy of the state if that is believed to be in the "national security interests of the United States." The law can be used to detain individuals who are not members of terrorist organizations but have provided, in the words of the bill, substantial support even to "associated forces." But what constitutes substantial? What constitutes support? What are these "associated forces"? What is defined under this law as an act of terror? What are the specific activities of those purportedly "engaged in hostilities against the United States"? None of this is answered. And this is why, especially as acts of civil disobedience proliferate, the NDAA law is so terrifying. It can be used by the military to seize and detain citizens and deny legal recourse to anyone who defies the corporate state.

#### **Politics presupposes agonism and contestation. Stripped of dissent, it becomes the practice of enemy creation. Dissent is a prerequisite to breaking cycles of demonization.**

Ivie, 8 (Robert, Professor of Communication and Culture at Indiana University in Bloomington, Toward a Humanizing Style of Democratic Dissent, Rhetoric & Public Affairs, Volume 11, Number 3, Fall 2008, pp. 454-458, http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/rap/summary/v011/11.3.ivie.html, SSM)

Democracy is, or at least involves, a politics of contestation. It is an agonistic affair of pluralistic politics, if we take our cue from the likes of Chantal Mouffe, not a protocol of dialogue or a practice of deliberation aimed at deriving a universal rational consensus.1 As Mouffe contends: Instead of trying to design the institutions which, through supposedly “impartial” procedures, would reconcile all conflicting interests and values, the task for democratic theorists and politicians should be to envisage the creation of a vibrant “agnostic” public sphere of contestation where different hegemonic political projects can be confronted. This is, in my view, the sine qua non for an effective exercise of democracy.2 As an agonistic affair, democracy puts differences into play on an uneven political field where hegemony, as a product of articulation, becomes subject in some measure to contestation and possibly even a modicum of reformulation. Thus skewed to hierarchy, the democratic contestation of a healthy pluralistic polity must somehow bridge divisive differences without eliding identities, that is, by means of partial and transitory transfigurations of underlying divisions. One of the prime challenges in an imperfect world of democratic give and take is to prevent where possible, and repair as necessary, agonistic exchanges that degenerate into antagonistic relations of social disaffection, cultural alienation, and political estrangement. When politics reduces to hostility and contestation degenerates into warfare against an evil or otherwise dehumanized and despised internal and/or external enemy, democracy is lost, at least for the moment, however long that moment may last. Or, perhaps expressed somewhat more realistically, when politics produces agonistic exchanges without creating enemies, democracy is achieved momentarily, however fleeting that moment proves to be. Yet, the burden of resisting dehumanizing discourses, I want to suggest, falls squarely on the many who are ruled by political elites rather than onto the elites who govern in place of and over the citizenry, thus necessitating the practice of a humanizing style of democratic dissent under the shadow of the modern warfare state. Any thorough conception of a democratic style for a pluralistic polity must therefore take into account the challenge of advancing a politically unconventional position without demonizing adversaries (or making oneself a demonized subject). With the rhetorical burden falling on those who contest conventional wisdom, standing policies, or other hegemonic formations, there may be no more quintessentially democratic discourse than that of dissent. Dissenters especially must learn to critique society in a humanizing instead of demonizing idiom because circumventing the enemy-making rituals of ruling regimes is a key to democracy’s momentary escape from tyrannizing hegemonies. Along with Gerard Hauser, I consider the challenge of negotiating the tricky, treacherous, reticulated terrain of pluralistic public spheres, “in which strangers develop and express public opinions by engaging one another,” to entail the operation of a vernacular rhetoric.3 Unlike Hauser, though, I want to emphasize the strategic and tactical nature of a vernacular rhetoric of resistance instead of how vernacular rhetoric might contribute to a “genuine dialogue,” discussion, or deliberation that “induces cooperation,” articulates an “informed opinion,” and yields a collective expression of “shared sentiments” between and among specific public spheres within an overall public sphere.4 Hauser’s emphasis on rhetoric as a political means “to produce cooperation within conditions of difference and interdependence”—conditions, he observes, that do not allow for “rational consensus” and that typically are marked by “ideological distortion”—shifts attention away from vernacular discourses of resistance and toward agonistic practices and relationships out of which “publics emerge and in which societies produce themselves.”5 At least tacitly, a telos of recovering the whole and of effecting collective self-governance through a productive interface of the state and civil society seems to inform Hauser’s sense of the vernacular as a democratic style in which publics form opinions “to guide governmental actions.”6 My emphasis on the vernacular intersects with Hauser’s concern for privileging citizen voices and advancing participatory democracy where political elites and official discourses otherwise enjoy a ruling presence. This emphasis on quotidian-everyday-colloquial discourses distinguishes a decidedly democratic style from related political idioms such as Robert Hariman’s conception of the republican style—a style that Hariman believes to be a crucial component of democratic governance, especially in political campaigns and parliamentary deliberations, but also one that ultimately is at odds with a democratic ethos. As modeled by Cicero, the rhetorical skills and sensibility of the republican style play out in “a public theater designed for broad effects.”7 Oratory is the principal vehicle of deliberation; the orator embodies the republic; consensus is valorized as both the means and the end of governance for the common good. As Hariman succinctly puts the matter, “In the republican mind, persuasion is the essence of politics, rhetorical virtuosity is the surest sign of political acumen, and public speaking is the master art.”8 Civic republicanism eschews secrecy, which is taken as a sign of subversion, and insists on speaking openly in a public discourse that constitutes the republic through an aesthetic of cohesion. Decorum, civility, dramatic gesture, and a proclivity for heroic leadership—all of this inclines the republican style toward elitism and against “the egalitarian ethos of democratic societies.”9 If a thoroughly democratic style is distinctly egalitarian and basically vernacular, it speaks in the voices of the citizenry from within the demos, not for the citizenry from above the demos. Eugene Debs, defying the Espionage Act of 1917—which proclaimed any wartime criticism of the government to be a treacherous act of sedition punishable (as it turned out in his case) by a ten-year prison sentence—articulated this very democratic sensibility in his socialist stand against capitalism by locating himself within the ranks of the working masses rather than posing as a leader or representative of the people. In his words: I am willing to be charged with almost anything, rather than to be charged with being a leader. I am suspicious of leaders, and especially of the intellectual variety. Give me the rank and file every day in the week. If you go to the city of Washington, and you examine the pages of the Congressional Directory, you will find that almost all of those corporation lawyers and cowardly politicians, members of Congress, and misrepresentatives of the masses—you will find that almost all of them claim, in glowing terms, that they have risen from the ranks to places of eminence and distinction. I am very glad I cannot make that claim for myself. I would be ashamed to admit that I had risen from the ranks. When I rise it will be with the ranks, and not from the ranks.10 One need not speak as a socialist to assume the persona of a common citizen, but any iteration of a patently democratic style positions speakers and audiences on a more or less equal footing with one another. As a leveling rather than leadership style, a democratic rhetoric is quintessentially a discourse of dissent rather than a discourse of governance. Invoking democracy as a mode of political rule, especially in the American context of liberal institutions and corporate power, Sheldon Wolin observes, is a mythic act that “legitimates the very formations of power which have enfeebled it.”11 Democracy, with its egalitarian commitment to participation, cooperation, inclusion, and community, fails to meet standards of efficiency and stability applied to systems of governance in a plural polity. Democracy should be regarded, then, as “beleaguered and permanently in opposition to structures it cannot command.”12 Rather than governing in a traditional sense, democracy exists in the “fugitive” status of a practice of resistance. It is an ephemeral phenomenon of the many dispersed across a multiplicity of sites. It “protests actualities and reveals possibilities” by relying on “the ingenuity of ordinary people . . . inventing temporary forms to meet their needs,” and thus, Wolin argues, it is an experience of “ongoing opposition” to elitist regimes that constitute the superpower of a corporate state dedicated to the containment of democracy.13 Given that “governing means manning and accommodating to bureaucratized institutions that, ipso facto, are hierarchical in structure and elitist, permanent rather than fugitive—in short, anti-democratic,” democracy cannot become a stable form of political rule without negating itself.14 Accordingly, and consistent with the perspective of Michel de Certeau, the basic challenge of democratic dissent is to develop a quotidian art of tactics that enable nonconforming speech to avoid being captured and contained within the ruling paradigms of governing regimes.15 Such tactics, at least in the case of peace-building dissent from the enemy-making discourses of a warfare state, involve recurring enunciations of humanizing themes and imagery that break the cycle of ritualized recrimination.16 Nothing could be more crucial to preserving the possibility of enhancing egalitarian relations across the human divide than vernacular rhetorics—voices of the demos—that cultivate a humanizing style of democratic dissent. Indeed, as Thomas Docherty argues, the “most fundamental form of democracy that we might have” will come through an experience that enables subjects to “know themselves always to be conditioned” by an alterity that is opened to them through aesthetic “encounter[s] with otherness.” By means of such aesthetic encounters we might hope to alter the collective self enough to move beyond the strictures of radical individualism and the diversion of sheer consumerism so that whatever is mine can never be simply “mine alone.”17 Otherwise, as is evident in the current and pervasive war on terror (a war that has no foreseeable end or spatial limit), the failure to cultivate a democratizing style of peace-building dissent with which to resist demonizing propaganda will only serve to increase the likelihood of succumbing further to advancing techniques of governance, surveillance, containment, and control. In Julian Reid’s view, this prospect increases the likelihood of reducing the citizenry to “states of docility, plasticity and logistical order,” that is: a life lived under the duress of the command to be efficient, to communicate one’s purposes transparently in relation to others, to be positioned where one is required, to use time economically, to be able to move when and where one is told to, and crucially, to be able to extol these capacities as the values which one would willingly, if called upon, kill and die for.18 In futile pursuit of a sustainable peace through recurring warfare against those at home and abroad who have been rendered alien, savage, and hostile to freedom, the project of liberal modernity sans a strengthened capacity for democratic dissent threatens to produce an unprecedented power “over the political constitution of life itself,” including the constraints it may place on what counts as human life and what we might imagine a life of agonistic relations with others could become.19 Thus, Reid warns that when a liberal regime attempts to convince its citizenry that nothing short of the survival of civilization and of life itself is wagered “in a conflict against an enemy stripped of all ordinary attributes of humanity,” it becomes necessary to question “as rigorously as possible the relations between life, war, and liberal modernity.”20 Only the vernacular voices of a dissenting demos speaking in a humanizing idiom about those who have been designated enemies of the state offer some possibility of escaping the regression from lively politics to deadly passivity.

#### The NDAA is part of a broader construction of identity through relations of power. The state remains perpetually unstable, generating spirals of violent intervention, and making war and genocide inevitable.

**Talbot 8** ( 'Us' and 'Them': Terrorism, Conflict and (O)ther Discursive Formations by Steven Talbot Defence Science and Technology Organisation Sociological Research Online, Volume 13, Issue 1Published: 21/3/2008

As a point of departure, this paper aims to explore the significance of identity[1](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#fn1)formation and negotiation as it pertains to various representations of terrorism. Particularly, this paper examines the ways in which **adversarial identities are socially constructed according to notions of difference which simultaneously encourages a comparison to, and rejection of, [O]thers**. Drawing upon the notion of the Other, this paper examines some of the ways in which identity is constructed through a variety of social and historical processes, and articulated within a range of discourses evoking different and often mutually exclusive combinations of sameness and difference. Using a social constructionist lens, I argue that **representations** of terrorism **are constructed from within specific discourses which accentuate difference**. My analysis therefore positions identity formation within a dynamic and relational context where discursive representation, ways of knowing, power and language intertwine. 1.4 Consequently, the following discussion explores identity formation and terrorism through an interpretive, constitutive and discursive lens. I start my discussion with an overview of the socially constructed or constituted nature of identity. This is followed by an exploration of the roles various discursive frameworks play in shaping representations of identity. I then examine some of the implications for viewing terrorism and identities within dichotomous frameworks, particularly within notions of Self and Other, and consequently, the discursive practice of ‘Othering.’ Finally, I interrogate the relational and discursive context of identity further by exploring the relationship between the above theoretical concerns as they pertain to polarised collective identities and intractable conflicts. Socially constituted identities 2.1 Identity construction pertains to the creation, maintenance and articulation of social identities by individuals or groups. Rummens ([2001](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#rummens2001)), draws a distinction between personal and social identities. Personal identity usually refers to the result of an identification of self, by self, or in other words the self-identification on the part of the individual. Social identity in contrast refers to the outcome of an identification of self by others, or the identity that is assigned an individual by another (p.3). Both of these concepts differ from self-identity, the individual self which is reflexively understood and worked upon by the individual through self-monitoring and self reflection ([Beck, 1992](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#beck1992); [Giddens, 1991](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#giddens1991)). 2.2 Sociological research into identity tends to focus on issues concerning the ascribed nature of identity, and the social construction and negotiation of group differences, whereas psychological approaches are more inclined to look at identity development and formation within the individual (i.e. identity searching, self concept and identity crisis). However it is important to remember that identities are not just ascribed or ‘achieved’ through socialisation processes, but are also socially constructed and negotiated between social actors. Through a sociological lens, identities by definition are socially constituted phenomena. In this sense, an individual’s or group’s identity is created, negotiated, and actively recreated through interaction with others. Identity can therefore be viewed as being a verb – it is something that one does, or is accomplished through social interaction ([West and Zimmerman, 1987](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#westzimmerman1987)). 2.3 Identity underscores how humans organise and therefore understand their social world. The notion of collective identity has been examined in classic sociological constructs like Marx’s ([1977](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#marx1977)) ‘class consciousness,’ Durkheim’s ([1960](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#durkheim1960)) ‘collective conscience’ and Weber’s ([1922](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#weber1922)) Verstehen (meaningful understanding). The commonality between these works is found in their emphasis on shared attributes, similarities, or the ‘We-ness’ of groups ([Cerulo, 1997](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#cerulo1997), p.386). Thus, the construction of group identities often involves a normative component, or in other words, individuals need to be able to recognise themselves in certain qualities, characteristic or behaviours associated with their group ([Schulte-Tenckhoff, 2001](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#schulte-tenckhoff2001), p.6). This recognition of ‘we-ness’ is important given the origins of the term identity. Identity finds its linguistic roots in the Latin noun identitas, with titas being a derivation of the Latin adjective idem meaning the same. Thus, the term is comparative in nature in relation to sharing a degree of sameness with others ([Rummens, 2001](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#rummens2001), p.3). Identity is therefore a relational construct, or as Connolly astutely asserts, ‘[t]here is no identity without difference’ ([1995](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#connolly1995), p.xx). 2.4 More significantly, identity constructions often emerge in response to the types of political systems governing that society. Political systems are extensions of societal identity. For example, liberal democracy is a political structure that forms and reflects a part of a societal identity construction in that it proscribes certain ideals and practices which inform members of liberal democratic societies how to live together and treat others. In turn, **the pursuit of political goals is also linked to the pursuit of identity (superpower identities inform superpower interests**). Consequently, a political system can also be viewed as a source of threat to societal identity ([Hughes, 2004](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#hughes2004), p.26). As Hughes observes, for those societies who draw their identity from non-liberal democratic (Western) traditions, the liberal democratic structure, and the values contained within this structure, may be perceived as a threat to group identity. The rhetoric of Osama Bin Laden is an example of this, with its emphasis on acts of violence against the Western, liberal democratic influences and their perceived threat to Islamic identity. 2.5 Political structures and associated organising**principles exert influence on political agendas, policy and**collective**self-definition**. Moreover, **political elites create, manipulate and dismantle identities** of nations **and** thus **shape the** subsequent **construction of allies and enemies**([Corse, 1996](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#corse1996); [Gillis, 1994](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#gillis1994); [Zerubavel, 1995](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#zerubavel1995) cited in [Cerulo, 1997](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#cerulo1997) p.390). Identity shifts can therefore also occur based on changing socio-political factors, for example, as a result of changing policy, increased ethnic politics, and political activism. Constructivists would contend that **identities**, norms, and culture **play an integral role for understanding world politics (and related policy)** and international relations, **particularly with** its emphasis on those processes through which behaviour and **identity construction is conceptualised and legitimated by various political agencies**. The roles knowledge construction and discourse plays in facilitating this process will be explored in the following discussion. Discourse and identity 3.1 Cultural constructions of identity are shaped by ‘a series of specific dialogues, impositions, and inventions’ ([Clifford, 2004](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#clifford2004), p.14). Such a position invariably requires a closer examination of the relationship between identity construction, language, power, knowledge creation and associated discursive practices. 3.2 For Hall, **a discourse: ‘defines and produces the objects of our knowledge. It governs the way that a topic can be meaningfully talked about and reasoned about. It also influences how ideas are put into practice and** used to regulate the conduct of others’ ([1997](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#hall1997), p.44). 3.3 The same discourse (which characterises a way of thinking or the given state of knowledge at one time) can appear throughout a range of texts, across numerous sites. When these discursive events refer to the same object, say terrorism for example, and share a similar style and support a strategy, they are said to belong to the same discursive formation ([Hall, 1997](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#hall1997), p.44). **It is through these discursive formations that things/**practices **acquire** their **meaning.** However, **discursive representation is not** a **benign** practice**, for it is** often **those in positions of power** and authority **who are able to construct ‘reality’ and** thus **knowledge itself**. As Klein ([1994](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#klein1994)) explains: ‘[a] discourse, then, is not a way of learning ‘about’ something out there in the ‘real world’; it is rather a way of producing that something as real, as identifiable, classifiable, knowable, and therefore, meaningful. Discourse creates the conditions of knowing’ (cited in [George, 1994](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#george1994), p.30). 3.4 Foucault contends that knowledge is a form of power, and that power is present or exercised within decisions regarding what circumstances knowledge is applied or not. Moreover, Foucault argues that **knowledge (when linked to power) assumes the authority of ‘the truth’ and has the power to make itself truethrough a variety of regulatory and disciplining practices** ([Hall, 1997](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#hall1997), p.49). Knowledge (ways of knowing about others through discursive representations) therefore is constructed by humans through their interactions with the world around them and is a reflection of existing social, historical and political factors, and as such, is never neutral. 3.5 In his analysis of the socially constructed nature of knowledge, Foucault explores the production of knowledge through discourse, and particularly how knowledge about the social, the individual, and associated shared meanings are produced in specific periods. In Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason (1988) and The History of Sexuality Volume One ([1981](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#foucault1981)), Foucault provides examples of the shifting historical significance of sexuality and mental illness and the emergence of deviant identities. In this respect, mental illness and sexuality did not exist as independent objects, which remained the same and meant the same thing throughout all periods. Rather, it was through distinct discursive formations that the objects ‘madness’ or ‘heterosexuality’ emerged and appeared as meaningful constructs. Sexual relations and desires have always been present, but the constructs ‘heterosexual’ and ‘homosexual’ were produced through moral, legal, and medical discourses and practices. Through these discourses and practices, behaviours and acts were aligned with the construction of ‘types of’ people or identities - identities which were subject to medical treatment and legal constraints designed to regulate behaviour. In this respect, social and self identities are a consequence of power reflected in historically and institutionally specific systems/sites of discourse. 3.6 As social constructs, it is important therefore to view knowledge and discourse production through the socio-historical conditions in which they are produced. In this respect,**discourses concerning** terrorism, **security** dilemmas and threat**,** and world order, **are produced within** specific historical, geographical and socio-political contexts as well as within social **relations of power**. Furthermore, **thecontrolling and legitimising aspects of discourse are such that proponents of violence are not likely to construct a narrative that is contrary to their values.**For instance, Al Qaeda is unlikely to construct a narrative that posits them in a contrary manner to their own moral values by engaging in ‘terrorist’ activities. Rather, they would position themselves as acting morally, and as victims of oppression or humiliation ([Cobb, 2004](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#cobb2004)). Similarly, the US and her coalition allies are also likely to construct a narrative which posits their involvement in a ‘fight against terror’ within a discursive framework of liberty and democracy, rather than expansionist or imperialist terms. 3.7 This paper now turns its attention to some of the ways in which identities are constituted through discursive practices which accentuate difference or sameness through the use of binaries. Dichotomous logic and identity construction Self/Other binaries 4.1 Notions of self and other and their implications for identity formation have been explored through psychoanalytical and postcolonial inquiry. In his book The Analysis of the Self: A Systematic Analysis of the Treatment of the Narcissistic Personality Disorders ([1971](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#kohut1971)), the founder of the psychology of the self Heinz Kohut extends Freud’s theory of narcissism (which has a dual orientation) in his examination of narcissistic rage and accompanying desires for revenge, and introduces the idea of ‘self-object relationships and transferences’ associated with mirroring and idealisation. Lacan ([2002](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#lacan2002)) also draws upon the notion of mirroring in regard to the identity formation of infants. Lacan’s ‘mirror stage’ occurs when the infant recognises its reflection and begins to view itself as being separate from its mother, or observes its mirrored image as viewed by the mother. The mirror stage represents the initial recognition of self as a unified subject, apart from external world and the ‘Other.’ This ‘Other’ (the first ‘big Other’ in an infant’s life being the mother) is fundamental to the constitution of self, as well as sexual identity. 4.2 In his foundational work Orientalism ([1978](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#said1978)), Edward Said examines the historical construction of the East (Them/Other) and West (Us/Self) as essentially different entities through discursive practices. Drawing upon Foucault’s notion of discourse, Said contends that Orientalism is a discourse: by which European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period (p. 3). 4.3 Such a **discourse draws upon** assumptions that are **imperialist** by design, privilege European sensibilities and representations of the Other, and reinforce **ideas** concerning the fixed nature of states of being and difference ([McDowell, 2003](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#mcdowell2003)). Said argues that Orientalist ideas can be found in current representations of ‘Arab’ cultures as backward, lacking democracy, threatening and anti-Western ([2003](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#said2003)). Similarly, Occidentalism[2](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#fn2) can be found in stereotypical representations of an “imperialist, corrupting, decadent and alienating West” (Nadje Al-Ali cited in [Freund, 2001](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#freund2001)). As I suggest later, these representations have become a feature of the current Western perceptions of terrorism. 4.4 As a practice, Othering is not solely a province of East versus West relations, but also exists as a strategy within other non-Westerns nations. For example, Shah ([2004](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#shah2004)), Kennedy-Pipe and Welch ([2005](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#kennedy-pipewelch2005)) and Baev ([2007](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#baev2007)) note how the ‘war on international terrorism’ **discourse has been used by Russia to legitimate** it **actions against** former Soviet republics like**Chechnya**. 4.5 Within a sociological context, identity discourse is often characterised by issues concerning essentialising and marginalising social groups, as well as totalising and categorising individuals and groups ([Gaudelli, 2001](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#gaudelli2001), p.60). Categorisation results as a response to diversity, wherein categorisation assists with making the diversity (of people) more understandable. As a consequence of this, people become viewed as being more typical of certain categories (eg. a Muslim from Iraq is stereotypically viewed as being ‘Muslim’ in comparison to an Australian Muslim in Cronulla within some discursive frameworks). Following the construction and application of these categories, is a tendency to essentialise (belief in essence) as is evident in notions of ‘the laconic Aussie,’ ‘the whingeing Pom,’ and the ‘fanatical terrorist.’ In this sense, the act of ‘naming’ is akin to ‘knowing.’ 4.6**Dividing practices** evident in the categorisation and essentialising processes which inform the production of binaries reflect power struggles, as they **primarily entail an external authority imposing a ‘condition of life upon people’** ([Gaudelli, 2001](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#gaudelli2001), p.74) **that are supposed to have certain essences.These power relations become evident in the abilitiesof claim-makers** or particular **agents to make certain discourses,** categories and labels **acceptable and make them ‘stick’**as it were. In turn, essentialism results in reifying culture by viewing cultural systems as being discrete and homogeneous units (nationally, ethnically and ideologically), which are ‘naturally given’ and fixed in locality ([Jones, 1999](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#jones1999)). Here it is important to remember, that it is not culture that is ‘found’ or ‘discovered’ out in the field, but individuals who act and interact and express their views of culture ([Schulte-Tenckhoff, 2001](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#schulte-tenckhoff2001), p.5). This paper contends that it is the relations between groups and related boundary making practices (insider/outsider, Self/Other) rather than ‘traits’ which are important indicators and producers of identity. As discussed above,**binaries**such as those of Self/Other **have a tendency to convey world views in**concrete**, simplified**and often**imperialist ways** ([Berry, 2006](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#berry2006)). The process of ‘Othering’ is commensurate with identification (as culture, community, or nation) which further entails an act of differentiation, authentication, and at times, exclusion – creating boundaries between members of the ‘in’ group and outsiders. In this sense the: ‘Self/Other relation induces comparisons used by social actors to describe themselves or to describe others, depending on their location. **In locking a given group into a substantially transformed identity, one constructs and immobilises this relation so that it operates in favour of those to whose advantage it is’** ([Schulte-Tenckhoff, 2001](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#schulte-tenckhoff2001), p.11). 4.7 Self/Other relations are therefore ‘matters of power and rhetoric rather than of essence’ ([Clifford, 2004](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#clifford2004), p.14). Within this context, boundary-making practices are a way of ‘locking’ ‘imagined communities’ into strategically informed ontological states of being. Moreover, these boundaries are inter-subjectively determined, that is, they are constructed through an emphasis on only a subset of many identity labels that apply (eg. religion). President George Bush has described his war on terror as a ‘crusade’ and a ‘divine plan’ guided by God. These sentiments are similar to Islamic calls for Jihad, with religious terrorists viewing themselves as God’s people and their enemies as God’s enemies, ‘infidels’, or sinners. As a consequence, for both sides, the conflict takes on the form of a ‘spiritual battle.’ Thus religious doctrine acts as fuel for Islamic-based terrorism as it does for the US led ‘war on terror’. Inside this discursive framework, both would contend that each party’s religion is the only meaningful one ([Berry, 2006](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#berry2006) p.4). Indeed, the**construction of identity plays a key role in** relation to the prospect for **religious and political violence**. Hence, identity claims invariably informs interests. The call by fundamentalist Islamists for a Jihad on Western nations for example is a realisation of both interests and identities simultaneously. In this sense, **identities and interests are mutually reinforcing concepts and incapable of being pursued separately** ([Hughes, 2004](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#hughes2004), p.7). 4.8 Identity negotiation highlights the political nature of social identifications of Self and Others within and between groups. **Contestation arises out of** those ascribed social or collective **identities that do not align with** an individual’s or group’s **self-definition**, **highlighting global and national tensions,** as well as power dynamics which frequently underplay such identification processes. Hence**Self/Other struggles are ultimately struggles of legitimacy and meaning,** frequently **enacting and fuelling conflict**. Indeed, **it is in the creation of Self and an all-threatening Other that the state,** or prominent figures within terrorist networks like Al Qaeda, **use** their **power** and available resources **for legitimated violence** ([Grondin, 2004](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#grondin2004)). Enemies and Others 4.9 Identity boundaries are functional in that they allow us to distinguish humans from animals, culture from nature, as well as differences between classes and nations. **Using identity to distinguish in this way is the foundation for insecurity and conflict**. Such **boundaries allow the** demarcation of ‘Us’ versus ‘Them’ and ‘domestic’ versus ‘foreign.’ Without the creation of these distinctions, the ‘enemy’ could not be identified ([Campbell, 1998](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#campbell1998) cited in [Hughes 2004](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#hughes2004)). 4.10 Sociology of the enemy examines the social **process of constructing enemies**, and within the context of identity politics and negotiation, creating Others **for advantageous reasons**. **Politicians, other charismatic leaders, social elites, and the military alike, are in prime positions to construct particular representations of the enemy**. In turn, **these representations are** also **influenced by** a host of other actors **(academics and intellectuals,** advisors), and array of sources and representations at their disposal. The proliferation of **these representations** through the internet, media reports, government documents, books, articles, and film has **led to an expansion of an enemy discourse** (as part of a deliberate and incidental public diplomacy[3](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#fn3)), assisting the articulation of a dualistic collective moral righteousness **which attempts to legitimate the destruction of the Other**([Aho, 1994](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#aho1994); cited in [Cerulo 1997](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#cerulo1997); [Berry, 2006](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#berry2006); [Hansen, 2004](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#hansen2004)). 4.11 Orientalist and occidentalist inspired representations of ‘enemies’ can be seen at work within the current terrorism discourse. The Australian and US national security ideology for example frames the terrorism discourse within a system of representations that defines Australian and US national identities through their reference to the Un-Australian, Un-American, Un-Western Other, usually confined to a Muslim/Islamic centre located in the Middle East, but also extending by association to Muslim/Islamist global diasporas. Similarly, representations of the Un-Eastern, Un-Muslim or Non-Islamic Other are employed by some Islamic fundamentalist groups to assert their identity and cause. Both parties construct an enemy that reflect and fuel ideological strains within the American/Australian body politic and Islamist terrorist networks ([Grondin, 2004](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#grondin2004), pp.15-16). The use of dichotomous logic in these representations fails to account for degrees of ‘Otherness’ and ‘Usness,’ or diversity, within both populations. In this sense, the homogenising effects of such a discourse fails to acknowledge an ‘other – Other,’ namely, a more moderate Muslim population located within an Islamic centre and its periphery. Similarly, distinctions can be drawn between an Australian ‘Us’ and her United States counterpart. In either case, the **discursive construction** of a homogenous West and ‘Rest’ **has the effect of silencing dissenting voices** residing within both camps. 4.12 Using simple dichotomies like ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ or ‘friend’ or ‘foe’ ignore the multidimensionality of identity and fail to recognise the interconnectedness and complexity of modern life. The use of such terms also highlights the emotional underpinnings for issues of security.**With** their use of an **enemy discourse** which incorporates notions of religiosity, good versus evil, and right and wrong, **both the Taliban and US** led ‘coalition of the willing’ **appeal to beliefs over empiricism** (what is knowable, measurable and debatable) – belief systems **grounded in notions of faith where it is important to believe things to be true, rather than actually being true**([Berry, 2006](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#berry2006), p.5). Similarly, claim making of this nature appeals to emotions (like hatred, revenge and fear) in contrast to logic in the sense that they encourage communities to feel in particular ways which are less likely to be challenged than appeals to think in particular ways ([Loseke, 2003](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#loseke2003), p.76). Hence, Berry ([2006](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#berry2006)) contends, that because definitions of enemies are often not empirically based, they can fluctuate according to the needs of the definers. 4.13 With the creation of ‘identifiable’ enemies, defining ‘Us’ automatically entails defining ‘Them,’ with ‘Them’ being the social foe or ‘evil’ ([Huntington, 1996](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#huntington1996)). As Burman and MacLure ([2005](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#burmanmaclure2005)) remind us, ‘there is always a hierarchy in these oppositions’ for there is an essence of a higher principle or ideal articulated in one, and something lesser, or subordinate in the other (p.284). Thus, within this hierarchical value system of prioritised logic, good is seen as coming before evil, positive before negative, Us before Them, and real over the written. Moreover,**to label a population as evil is to render the other ‘sub-human.’** We are told of the ‘Evil doers,’ Axis of evil,’ Osama Bin Laden the evil, America the evil, capitalism the evil, and terrorism the evil, and evil acts ([Davetian, 2001](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#davetian2001)). The ensuing pursuit and **eradication of this evil** within the context of **calls for** jihad and a corresponding ‘war on terror’ also implies a ‘promotion of **war** more willingly than accommodation’ ([Armitage, 2003](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#armitage2003), p.202). However, as is the case with dichotomous logic, good and evil are two sides of the same coin, or mutually sustaining concepts. Thus, to speak of eradicating evil in this context is a nonsensical pursuit. As Baudrillard explains: ‘We believe naively that the progress of the Good, its advance in all fields (the sciences, technology, democracy, human rights), corresponds to a defeat of Evil. No one seems to have understood that Good and Evil advance together, as part of the same movement…Good does not conquer Evil, nor indeed does the reverse happen: they are once both irreducible to each other and inextricably interrelated’ ([2002](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#baudrilard2002), p.13). Dichotomous logic can be applied to an examination of security and associated threat discourses. Threats and (in)security 4.14 Stern defines terrorism as ‘an act or threat of violence against non-combatants with the objective of exacting revenge, intimidation, or otherwise influencing an audience’ ([2003](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#stern2003), p.xx). One of the aims of this act of violence is to instil fear in the target audience. However, to better understand this notion of terrorism and threat, one also needs to understand the discursive power of claim makers, and those in positions of authority (whether they be political parties, clerics and other elites or the military for that matter) in shaping or co-constituting them so. As Campbell ([1998](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#campbell1998)) alludes: ‘[d]anger is not an objective condition. It is not a thing which exists independently of those to whom it may become a threat…nothing is a risk in itself;…it all depends on how one analyses the danger, considers the event’ (pp.1-2). 4.15 To this end, the securitization school of thought developed by the Copenhagen School examines the socially constructed dimension of security threats by looking at the ways in which processes like social interaction form as well as alter interests, and in the process, construct or constitute security. By using an inter-subjective lens to look at security, proponents of this school explore the extent to which power relationships and language as expressed through **discourse shape understandings of threatsand subsequent security responses**. They argue that by labelling something a security issue or threat, actors invoke the right to use whatever means to stop that threat. Here language is akin to a ‘speech act,’ or in other words, relates to the act of speaking in a way that gets someone else to act ([Hughes, 2004](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#hughes2004), p.14). 4.16 Labelling something as a security issue, or some group or community as a threat can therefore be seen as a powerful political tool in terms of the behaviour of governments and other interest groups. Indeed,**to label a problem a ‘security’ issueor a ‘threat’gives this problem a special status,** and one**which can legitimate extraordinary measures to tackle it.** Within the current climate of terrorism, **threats to security are often characterised as emanating from Others who view their global neighbours rapaciously and are ready to pounce at first sign of weakness.** 4.17 The following discussion examines the relational and socially constructed nature of identity and its relevance to various discursive representations of terrorism through its analysis of polarised collective identities and intractable conflict. Polarised collective identities and conflict 5.1 **Protracted conflicts have dominated the international arena and have resulted in** much of **the violence and terrorism** witnessed **today**. These types of conflict usually centre on deep-rooted issues such as struggles over material, human needs, or an historical grievance. The **relationships** which feature in these forms of conflict **comprise of self-perpetuating spiral of violent interactions in which each party develops a vested interest in the continuation of the conflict**. **They**also characteristically**entail ‘polarised perceptions of hostility and enmity’** ([Bercovitch, 2003](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#bercovitch2003)). 5.2 In the case of polarised collective identities and protracted conflict, **conflict invariably centres on identity struggles**, categorisation, **and perceived difference** (and related issues concerning values and beliefs). Social and collective **identity construction is by nature a source of indirect and direct threat.**As Hughes explains: ‘[i]ndirectly, identity construction contains the possibility for identity threat since the adoption and practice of one identity necessarily precludes the fulfilment of another by the same audience’ ([2004](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#hughes2004), p.24). 5.3 Direct threats are expressed in terms of an identity’s stance toward the existence and identification of ‘others.’ These stances can occur along a continuum ranging from accepting to eliminating ([Hughes, 2004](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#hughes2004), p.24). It is important to note, however that identity contains the potential for, rather than the inevitability of conflict. Nevertheless, an examination of the literature and theories concerning identity, Self-Other differentiation, highlights the extent to which individuals not only display a tendency for assigning people with whom they interact into a class of Self/Other, but also show how individuals treat more favourably other individuals whom they consider Self, than those who they regard as Other. ‘Inclusive fitness’ and social identity theories for example have shown how sharing ‘genetic material,’ or having similar observable characteristics such as looks, religion, ethnicity (markers of ‘in-group’ and ‘out-group’ status) informs behaviour between groups/others ([Ben-ner, McCall, Stephane, and Wang, 2006](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#ben-ner2006)). 5.4 The concept collective identity refers to a ‘shared place’ in the social world, or the ‘we’ aspect of identity that develops through a process of self-categorization, identification and social interaction. Moreover, whilst these identities can be chosen freely by individuals, they can also be imposed by others who have the resources and authority to do so (as is the case with labelling Others evil, a threat, or enemies through the discursive practices highlighted above). Collective identities serve many symbolic, practical and normative functions such as fulfilling needs for belonging, distinctiveness, respect, unity and status. They also provide a justification for claims and a focus for the maintenance of a distinctive culture or way of life ([Coleman, 2004](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#coleman2004)). Such a position presumes or utilises a sense of ‘we-ness,’ or group homogeneity, which discounts levels of heterogeneity that may exist. 5.5 As stated above, protracted conflicts are rooted in the perceived threat to basic human needs and values, as well as concerns over group dignity, recognition, security and distributive justice. When these aspects of collective identities are denied or threatened in some way, intractable conflict occurs. As the conflict intensifies, antagonistic groups become increasingly polarised through an in-group discourse and out-group hostilities focussed on the negation, defamation and vilification of the out-group ([Druckman, 2001](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#druckman2001); [Fordham and Ogbu, 1984](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#fordhamogbu1984); [Hicks, 1999](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#hicks1999); [Kelman, 1999](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#kelman1999) cited in [Coleman, 2004](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#coleman2004)). 5.6 In his review of the literature, Coleman ([2004](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#coleman2004)) highlights a series of conditions, processes and structural issues that are conducive to the development and maintenance of polarised collective identities and related conflict. Eight of these conditions include: 1. ‘Situations where there is a pervasive belief in enduring hostilities where the disputants feel locked – into the intensity and oppression of the conflict relationship’ ([Coleman, 2004](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#coleman2004), p.11; [Fordham and Ogbu, 1984](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#fordhamogbu1984)). 5.7 During his speech to the National Guard in February 2006, President George [Bush](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#bush2006) talks of the ongoing nature and progress of the War on Terror: …On September the 11th, 2001, our nation saw that vast oceans and great distances could no longer keep us safe. I made a decision that day -- that America will not wait to be attacked again. (Applause.) And since that day, we've taken decisive action to protect our citizens against new dangers. We're hunting down the terrorists using every element of our national power -- military, intelligence, law enforcement, diplomatic, and financial. We're clarifying the choice facing every nation: In this struggle between freedom and terror, every nation has responsibilities -- and no one can remain neutral… 5.8 Implied within this discourse is the notion that if you are not with us, then you are against us, and thus a potential enemy. The discussion also makes it clear that there is no room for negotiation with, or accommodation to, the enemy. The view that terrorists are also locked into a zero-sum battle has also been reported. R. James Woolsey has been quoted in the National Commission of terrorism as saying, “today’s terrorists don’t want a seat at the table, they want to destroy the table and everyone sitting at it” ([Morgan, 2004](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#morgan2004), pp.30-31). 2. The involvement of ‘salient aspects of identity’ (cultural differences) ‘where the in-group and out-group can be easily differentiated’ ([Coleman, 2004](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#coleman2004), p.12; [Gurr, 2000](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#gurr2000)). 5.9 The representation of the Muslim/Islamic Other with its emphasis on radically different values systems, becomes evident in references to religious motivations for terrorist attacks – religious ideals which are positioned in opposition to more ‘moderate’ Christian values. As argued above, both often use religious justifications as part of their claims making and their respective calls for a ‘Jihad’ on the US and her Allies, and the US led ‘War on Terror.’ Similarly, Esmer ([2002](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#esmer2002)) and Norris and Inglehart ([2002](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#norrisinglehart2002)) note how hallmarks of Western democracies which are built upon principles of rights (the ‘Land of the Free’), gender equality, sexual liberation pose a threat to traditional values extant in some Islamic cultures. Representations of this kind accentuate perceived cultural differences. In this sense, culture can be viewed as having three components: an empirical aspect (culture understood as communities with their own sets of identifiable, observable, and transferable cultural traits); an analytical aspect (culture used as a conceptual tool) and more significantly a strategic aspect (instrumentalisation of culture/religion to advance identity claims) (LCC, 2001, p.4). 3. ‘Where there exists the perception of negative treatment or threat to an identity group of high centrality and importance’ ([Coleman, 2004](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#coleman2004), p.12; [Fordham and Ogbu, 1984](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#fordhamogbu1984)). 5.10 There will be in most issues concerning security, a structure of two basic discourses, which articulate radically differing representations of identity (whether they be the humiliated other, the freedom fighting champion, or fanatical terrorist). Many ethnic and religious conflicts that cover the globe are fuelled by stories of humiliation, which in turn, are the basis for stories of revenge. Authors like Hassan ([2004](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#hassan2004)), Bendle ([2002](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#bendle2002)), Cobb, ([2004](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#cobb,2004)) and Davetian ([2001](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#davetian2001)) have noted how (suicide) terrorist attacks offer self empowerment in the face of powerlessness, redemption in the face of damnation and honour in the face of humiliation. 5.11 Group boundaries are also often delineated according to symbolic, spatial, religious and social referents, ensuring collective identification within, while simultaneously ensuring the exclusion of outsiders. In this respect, the symbolic attacks on the Pentagon, Twin Towers, and the planned attack on the Whitehouse, represent an attack on the pillars of Western democracy and capitalism, and as such, threats to ‘ways of life’ and identity. 4. ‘High mortality salience where death-related anxieties motivate people to become more deeply committed to their cultural groups as a means of buffering such anxiety’ ([Coleman, 2004](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#coleman2004), p.12; [McCauley, 2001](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#mccauley2001)). 5.12 Humphrey argues that the impact of **September 11th** as reported by real time coverage on international television networks, “**was seductive in conjuring up** the sense that we are living in an era of ubiquitous and even **world-ending violence**” ([2004](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#humphrey2004): 3). The **fear of apocalyptic violence posed by WMD was a major justification for pursuing a pre-emptive war against Afghanistan and Iraq**. In turn, a ‘death-related anxiety’ was felt by Western nations with the prospect of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) falling into the hands of Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda terrorist networks. These fears were not alleviated when George W. Bush for example asserted the ‘terrorist groups’ would use WMD ‘without a hint of conscience’ ([Bullimer 2002](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#bullimer2002)). By**linking**these two issues **(terrorism and WMD)** political**discourses**of this **kind reified terrorism and WMD**,setting into action a series of actions designed to control their proliferation. 5.13 Structural issues which act to reinforce and maintain polarised collective identities include: 5. ‘A negation of the Other’ ([Coleman, 2004](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#coleman2004), p.17). 5.14 This, according to Coleman is the ‘fundamental aspect of the in-group’s identity’ (17). Identity creation through negation entails making a statement of in-group’ identity with reference to what it is not, or does not consist of, for example ‘I am a Christian, not a Muslim.’ Strategies employed in the negation of the Other also include: marginalisation of ethnic and religious groups through naming; racialisation; criminalisation; and stigmatisation. Response strategies of the ‘out-group’ include: collective resistance to ascribed identities; group empowerment; demands for collective group rights (territorial claims) in an attempt to secure greater autonomy, legitimisation and social control ([Rummens, 2001](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#rummens2001), p.18). 6. ‘The outgroup images become negative, homogeneous, abstract and stereotypical’…particularly in regards to the productions of ‘enemy images’ which ‘contain an emotional dimension of strong dislike…these**images tend to become self-fulfilling and self-reinforcing**, serving important interests and needs’ ([Coleman, 2004](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#coleman2004), pp.17-18; [Stein, 1999](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#stein1999); [Toscano, 1998](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#toscano1998)). 5.15 Implicit within ‘Us/Them,’ ‘East/West,’ ‘Good/Bad’ and ‘Self/Other’ binaries is the notion that opposing identities are relatively homogenous. The**use of** these non-specific yet **all-inclusive tags** also **serves to dehumanise and depersonalise a highly abstracted Other**. In turn, depersonalisation allows social stereotyping, group cohesiveness and collective action to occur. The construction of absolutist discourses of this kind are an important vehicle for understanding conflict: ‘[a]lthough generally described as integrated and homogensous, communities as loci of production, transmission, and evolution of group membership foster conflict through the negotiation and manipulation of social representations’ (LCC, 2001, p.6). 5.16 Here, the demarcation of the common enemy/Other assists with the mobilisation of one group against another ([Aho, 1994](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#aho1994)).**Identity demarcation** of this kind further **allows the mobilisation of audiences to carry out conflict**. President Bush for example has made many references to ‘evil doers’. He has been quoted as saying ‘we're on the hunt...got the evildoers on the run...we're bringing them to justice’ and ‘they kill without mercy because they hate our freedoms...’ ([Sample, 2006](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#sample2006), [The White House, 2001](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#the%20white%20house2001)). The emotive language used in ‘speech acts’ of this kind are designed to elicit ‘in-group’ distinctiveness and cohesion through the negation and disparagement of the ‘out-group’ (terrorist organisations). The use of terms ‘evil doers,’ ‘them,’ and ‘they’ are interesting however in the sense that they refer to an enemy that extends beyond the confines of terrorist organisations like Al Qaeda. 7. ‘A clear and simplified depiction of good (us) and evil (them) that serves many functions’ ([Brown and Gaertner, 2001](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#browngaertner2001); [Coleman, 2004](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#coleman2004), p.18). 5.17 By framing their conflict within a discourse which accentuates a struggle between good and evil, both religious terrorist groups and their Western-led protagonists, view non-members of either camp to be ‘infidels’ or ‘apostates’ ([Cronin, 2003](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#cronin2003)) and ‘immoral’ or ‘fanatical’ respectively. The maintenance of such a discourse can be seen as serving a dual purpose; namely, to dehumanise the respective victims on both sides of the conflict, and sustain in-group and out-group identities. 8. ‘In extreme cases, pain and suffering for one’s group and one’s cause come to be considered meritorious’ ([Coleman, 2004](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#coleman2004), p.19; [Zartman, 2001](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#zartman2001)). 5.18 Martyrdom is a well documented motivation for engaging in terrorist activity. From 1996-1999, Nasra Hassan, a United Nations relief worker in Gaza interviewed 250 aspiring suicide bombers. In one interview, the late spiritual leader of Hamas, Sheikh Yasin, told her that martyrdom was a way of redemption, "[l]ove of martyrdom is something deep inside the heart. But these rewards are not in themselves the goal of the martyr. The only aim is to win Allah's satisfaction. That can be done in the simplest and speediest manner by dying in the cause of Allah. And it is Allah who selects martyrs" ([Hassan, 2004](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#hassan2004), p.1). Conclusion 6.1 This paper has explored some of the issues concerned with identity formation, construction and negotiation. In doing so, this paper has focussed on the socially constructed aspects of identity, and in particular, the extent to which social identities are subjectively constructed according to perceived differences in comparison to others. Hansen contends, identity is “always a relational concept, and it is constructed within discourses, not given by the thing itself” ([2004](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#hansen2004), p.4). 6.2 Meaning is therefore also relational, for the identification of/with difference between imagined communities like the East and West denotes, or holds meaning. Consequently, identity construction involves a degree of ‘Othering’, and within this context, social identities can be constructed and understood as being more or less threatening and different. Issues of Otherness are central to understanding terrorist activity, and are a feature of security discourses girding the current ‘war on terror.’ To this end, this paper has examined the relationship between power and the formation, emergence, and mobilisation of culturally-based collective identities and their expression through representation, narratives, discourse and language. 6.3 Using a social constructionist and a somewhat postcolonialist inspired analysis, this paper questions the utility of dichotomies like Self/Other, insider/outsider, Us/Them, Good/Evil used within terrorist discourses. The ensuing discursive formation shapes the ways in which terrorism can be meaningfully talked about, understood, and tackled. In the process of defining and establishing difference, the discourse of the Other is also highlighted, since such definitions invariably allude to an object in terms of what it is not. Such a practice entails the social construction of some other person, group, culture or nation as being different and deficient from one’s own. Hence as Simon Dalby ([1997](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#dalby1997)) observes, “specifying difference is a linguistic, epistemological and, most importantly, a political act; it constructs a space for the other distanced and inferior from the vantage point of the person specifying the difference” (cited in [Grondin, 2004](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/17.html#grondin2004), p.5-6). For Said, accentuating difference in this way is central to dichotomous representations of the Self and Other, and through the lens of Orientalism, the creation of a self serving discourse which privileges the world-view of the West. 6.4 When examining issues concerning what is terrorism, who practices it and why, as well as appropriate responses to this activity, this paper contends that such **issues are often clouded by** a rhetoric **(discourse) that has deflected attention away from** political and moralconcerns **underlying** political **violence**. This paper has also argued that utilising dichotomous logic in the construction of an enemy is a counterproductive strategy for grappling with terrorism. The use of **binaries** like Good/Evil and Us/Them **assist with the construction of a dehumanised Other** who cannot be reasoned with, thus **repudiating calls for negotiation, and** in the process, **reducing incentives to understand difference**. **Demonising the enemy**in such a manner,**amplifies fear and alarm,** and**perpetuates cycles of**revenge and**retaliation which necessitate more violent responses** to perceived injustices. In this sense**, the production** and maintenance **of a West and Rest dichotomy,** a dichotomy which characterises current terrorist and security discourses**, has** also **lead to the creation of mutually sustaining antagonisms ensuring further conflict. 6.5 Consequently, it is important to rethink the binary oppositions**employed within the social constructions of other socio-cultural groups, enemies or threats, and national identities. When employed within a national security context, **these** dichotomies not only serve to reify imagined differences between communities, but also may **inflame hostilities through** the **continuation of oppositional identities** and relations which are **viewed as** being **fixed, and** thus **resistant to change. A way around thisbinary impasseis**the**construction of counter-discourses**which contain dual positions for both parties as victims and as agents of conflict. As long as both sides represent themselves as being victims, rather than perpetrators of violence, more violence will ensue. Moreover, another way **to challenge the legitimacy of dichotomous logic is to create a counter-discourse** highlighting the diversity extant within ‘so-called’ homogenous populations.

**The public sphere is an apparatus for installing power and privilege. Dissent has the unique ability to interfere with this constitution of the public sphere.**

**Williams 08** (Daniel, Associate Professor of Law, Northeastern University, 11-13-08, "After the Gold Rush—Part II: Hamdi, the Jury Trial, and Our Degraded Public Sphere" Penn State Law Review) pennstatelawreview.org/articles/113%20Penn%20St.%20L.%20Rev.%2055.pdf

The classic Frankfurt School diagnosis of American culture is grim and pessimistic. Jurgen Ilabermas rebels against the pessimism that pervades Dialectic of the Enlightenment, but he does not repudiate the essential diagnosis found there, though he surely seeks to deepen it with what he regards as a more nuanced investigation into the true roots of Enlightenment rationality.157 For our purposes, to this observation of humanity's destructive fetish with means-ends rationality, we may add Habermas's emphasis on the public sphere as an optimistic source of rationality.151\* In the idealized vision that Ilabermas presents, the public sphere consists of voluntary associations dedicated to promoting unconstrained rational interchange among free and equal participants of good will.15 **It is in the public sphere, if truly healthy** (free from the distortions of domination), **that the common good can be gleaned**.160 **It is in the public sphere that government overreaching can be checked and averted.**161 On this view, world **public opinion**, cultivated within vibrant public spheres that somehow escape the distortions of governmental and corporate propaganda, **may function**, in this post-Cold War era that has bled into the Age of Terror, **as the only** potential **countervailing force to the dominant super-power**, the United States. What **a vibrant public sphere provides** are **tools to resist** naturalistic **illusions undergirding social institutions and practices that preserve and promote spheres of inequality and regimes of domination, but that seem to be** socially **necessary**. The idea here is well-rehearsed in the literature of critical theory: that which is socially constructed is made to appear fixed **and natural; that which serves narrow interests of power and privilege is made to appear to serve everyone**.162 **A culture beholden to means-ends thinking** is a culture that **has lost its capacity for critical theorizing, and such a culture is, as a result, at the mercy of its illusions. A vibrant public sphere that** successfully **exposes illusions**, which conceal unhealthy conditions for society, **is crucial to** social **change,** for the **exposing** of **such illusions is exactly what loosens the screws that keep unworthy** social **institutions intact.**163 **A vibrant public sphere is the environment for rendering institutions malleable and open to change**, which is why thinkers from Kant to Habermas regard "the public sphere as the definitive institution of democracy."164 The big problem, however, is that **the "public sphere" in consumerist societies such as ours may itself have evolved into an illusion, propping up the justificatory myth that the Sovereign's activity is in check and in harmony with the consent of the governed**.165 Consider the implications if we find, as an empirical matter, that **the public sphere is beholden to the powerful and privileged but still retains the image of functioning largely in its idealized way. That false consciousness**, to use a very unfashionable phrase, **creates manifold opportunities for a bloated sovereignty**—indeed, perhaps one like we are witnessing today—**and a bloated sovereignty coexists nicely with a consumerist mentality that cannot seem to imagine any alternative to the present, other than a future that consists only of the present just with more snazzy gadgets. Evidence abounds that** this **false consciousness pervades America today, with disastrous consequences. Vital issues of war and peace** (let alone important issues revolving around **health care, education, and economic well-being**) **are presented in stage-managed fashion, with vast sums of money spent on manipulating over-worked, anxiety-riddled consumerists who cling to an anachronistic, jingoistic, pre-Cold War understanding of what this nation stands for in the world.** Voting is no longer the culminating act that follows a period of reflection and probing dialogue and debate, but rather **voting is a reaction to "campaigns,"** operations not unlike military campaigns and Madison Avenue advertising campaigns, **where the human commodity on display (the "candidate") has been selected largely through big-money donors and inside-power politics.**166 **If the hollowed-out nature of democracy captures something real in our culture,** then **is it really surprising that** the great institutional **embodiment of democracy and the most vitalizing expression of the Enlightenment, the right to trial by jury, has been under siege?**167 And **if we abide the erosion of it,** if we find that trial by jury cannot purchase its way into our culture because it cannot satisfy our quest for means-ends efficiency and because we have lost our vocabulary for non-instrumentalist justificatory ways of thinking and being, **then what democratic institutions are next?**

#### Interrupting hegemonic understandings of what counts as a livable life depends on dissent

Butler 4 (Judith, Professor at University of California, Berkeley, Precarious Life, The Powers of Mourning and Life, p. XIX-XX, SSM)

Dissent and debate depend upon the inclusion of those who maintain critical views of state policy and civic culture remaining part of a larger public discussion of the value of policies and politics. To charge those who voice critical views with treason, terrorist-sympathizing, anti-Semitism, moral relativism, postmodernism, juvenile behavior, collaboration, anachronistic Leftism, is to seek to destroy the credibility not of the views that are held, but of the persons who hold them. It produces the climate of fear in which to voice a certain view is to risk being branded and shamed with a heinous appellation. To continue to voice one's views under those conditions is not easy, since one must not only discount the truth of the appellation, but brave the stigma that seizes up from the public domain. Dissent is quelled, in part, through threatening the speaking subject with an uninhabitable identification. Because it would be heinous to identify as treasonous, as a collaborator, one fails to speak, or one speaks in throttled ways, in order to sidestep the terrorizing identification that threatens to take hold. This strategy for quelling dissent and limiting the reach of critical debate happens not only through a series of shaming tactics which have a certain psychological terrorization as their effect, but they work as well by producing what will and will not count as a viable speaking subject and a reasonable opinion within the public domain. It is precisely because one does not want to lose one's status as a viable speaking being that one does not say what one thinks. Under social conditions that regulate identifications and the sense of viability to this degree, censorship operates implicitly and forcefully. The line that circumscribes what is speakable and what is livable also functions as an instrument of censorship. To decide what views will count as reasonable within the public domain, however, is to decide what will and will not count as the public sphere of debate. And if someone holds views that are not in line with the nationalist norm, that person comes to lack credibility as a speaking person, and the media is not open to him or her (though the internet, interestingly, is). The foreclosure of critique empties the public domain of debate and democratic contestation itself, so that debate becomes the exchange of views among the like-minded, and criticism, which ought to be central to any democracy, becomes a fugitive and suspect activity. Public policy, including foreign policy, often seeks to restrain the public sphere from being open to certain forms of debate and the circulation of media coverage. One way a hegemonic understanding of politics is achieved is through circumscribing what will and will not be admissible as part of the public sphere itself. Without disposing actions in such a way that war seems good and right and true, no war can claim popular consent, and no administration can maintain its popularity. To produce what will constitute the public sphere, however, it is necessary to control the way in which people see, how they hear, what they see. The constraints are not only on content— certain images of dead bodies in Iraq, for instance, are considered unacceptable for public visual consumption—but on what "can" be heard, read, seen, felt, and known. The public sphere is constituted in part by what can appear, and the regulation of the sphere of appearance is one way to establish what will count as reality, and what will not. It is also a way of establishing whose lives can be marked as lives, and whose deaths will count as deaths. Our capacity to feel and to apprehend hangs in the balance. But so, too, does the fate of the reality of certain lives and deaths as well as the ability to think critically and publicly about the effects of war.

#### Thus Spencer and I actively dissent against sections 1021 and 1022 of the National Defense Authorization Act

#### **Only dissent has the capacity to produce a new form of democracy capable of sustaining the self-questioning critical to stemming the expansion of war.**

Stitzlein 12 (Sarah, University of Illinois, THE RIGHT TO DISSENT AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOLING, Educational Theory, Volume 62, Issue 1, pages 41–58, 16 JAN 2012, SSM)

Defining Dissent Dissent entails both skills (such as effective use of historically informed persuasive speech, timing, and media) as well as dispositions (such as commitment, hopefulness, and courage). The skill-based abilities involve cognitive and moral reasoning as well as effective use of strategy and language. Disposed to empathy and care, dissenters seek out, listen to, and take into account the experiences and opinions of others. Dissent occurs when a citizen openly disagrees with the consensus of a community or the dictates of those in power. It sometimes entails risking one's well-being by expressing a different opinion. When done under admirable conditions (as opposed to simply dissenting for the sake of dissent or out of narrow self-interest that lacks concern for the common good or for moral principles), this risk employs critique in the pursuit of truth or goodness and is undertaken in the spirit of benefiting the lives of others. Robert Ivie's eloquent description of admirable and justified dissent within a healthy democracy is worth quoting at length: Communicating artfully the fruit of free intellectual inquiry amounts to speaking in the democratic idiom, and dissenting in the idiom of democracy means contesting opinions robustly but respectfully, that is, with respect for the diverse views and plural interests of a strong and inclusive—open and vital—democratic public. It means speaking to the complexities of issues rather than debunking opponents and oversimplifying problems. It means crossing conceptual boundaries—making them permeable, flexible, and adaptive rather than rigid and brittle opposites. This is what helps a diverse people act collectively with a maximum degree of critical consciousness, which is much preferred over an undemocratic condition of sheer polemics.9 Here, dissent is richly portrayed as taking account of multiple perspectives and striving to understand their complexity, while respectfully challenging concepts and viewpoints in order to pursue a democratically agreed upon course for public policy. Dissent takes many forms, which, at times, overlap. The first type of dissent is that of the cultural critic, who interprets and critiques cultural events and practices in order to expose their shortcomings and ultimately direct attention toward better ways of living. Cultural critics work to help others see some aspect of cultural practice, norms, or law that the community had not previously seen as problematic. While these critics serve a valuable social role, their efforts typically stop at writings or speeches; they turn the continued, and often more challenging, aspects of the movement for change over to others. This brings us to the second type of dissent, which involves building a movement to raise awareness of an issue that has been silenced or ignored by the mainstream. This form of dissent may also entail making it known that some stakeholders do not agree with the view of those in power. Dissidents of this type put forward alternative information and form independent organizations, both noteworthy aspects of a healthy democracy.10 They may march, picket, or protest. While they may not necessarily “fix” a problem, they make it known that there are people who disagree, build solidarity with others who hold an alternative view, or destigmatize an issue by bringing it into public view through consciousness-raising. The third type uses dissent to change minds or practices. This targeted form of social change may play out under a picket sign, but it may also occur through more subtle democratic contributions or participation within the system the dissident seeks to change. It tends to be a far less flashy approach, aimed at genuinely changing the opinions of other people or of presenting alternative perspectives, rather than just demanding their attention or urging them to do something differently. Such change of opinion, however, may require the instigation of controversy in order to challenge witnesses to question their beliefs and to consider alternative ones. The fourth type of dissent involves rallying one's compatriots. The aim is not to change the minds of opposing groups, but rather to enliven, impassion, and ignite one's supporters as a cheerleader of sorts. This “preaching to the choir” may involve sharing stories or facts that support a viewpoint held by one's group or using coalition-building techniques and public announcement systems to mobilize one's group.11 Dissent and Healthy Democracy In large part, dissent is central to healthy democracy because it brings about a proliferation of perspectives and sparks conversation. Dissent works against stagnation by bringing forward new ideas and revealing problematic implications of old ones. It gives us a process through which we can reconsider and revise our collective identities and our individual goals. Few people—perhaps only some religious fundamentalists or zealots for cultural cohesion—would find these aspects of dissent less than admirable. But it is one thing to celebrate an act or ability and another to elevate it to the status of a right. The right to political dissent, though valuable in most any setting, is not a straightforward universal human right; rather, it is a civil right that derives its status largely from being situated within a democracy. In order for the democracy to be legitimately supported by its citizens and in order for the democracy to be revisable in response to the changing needs of its population, the right to dissent must be guaranteed. Leaders of the early republic acknowledged a cycle that protects and is protected by dissent. They recognized that dissent led to the foundation of the new democracy; they understood dissent to be a right conferred by the democratic government; and they also couched the right to dissent within the duty of citizens to maintain a flourishing democratic state. The important role of dissent continues to be proclaimed within more contemporary contexts. This is especially the case when operating under deliberative democracy, which involves democratic participation, inclusive dialogue, public reasoning, deliberation, and collaborative social and political decision making. Skills and dispositions of dissent become central to one's ability to participate in and influence political life within deliberative democracy.

#### The unique black female perspective is an epistemological necessity for political decisions

Jennifer Nash, Assistant Professor of American Studies and Women's Studies at George Washington University, “Home Truths' on Intersectionality” Yale Journal of Law and Feminism 2011

If black feminism was moving from "outsider" knowledge to academic practice, intersectionality was becoming central to black feminism's institutionalization. Crenshaw's and Collins's interventions were essential to intersectionality's prominent theoretical place in black feminism studies, and contributed to black feminism's installation in the academy. I underscore the centrality of institutionalization to this moment because it is a crucial turning point in the history of both intersectionality and black feminism; the shift from activist organizations to academic departments as loci of black feminist intellectual production meant that intersectionality was no longer simply a "survival theory" insisting on black women's place in feminism and anti-racist projects. Suddenly, intersectionality was also an intellectual product, one that began to move across disciplinary borders, and that was celebrated as "the most important theoretical contribution that women's studies, in conjunction with related fields, has made so far."4 7 Crenshaw's and Collins's respective projects share a set of aims: to include black women in feminist and anti-racist conversations that all too often ignored black women (Crenshaw in legal doctrine and Collins in Sociology and Women's Studies), and to demonstrate how existing epistemological frameworks are complicated by black women's intersectional experiences. Both advance the ethical and political utility of adopting black women's vantage points, suggesting that black women's intersectional experiences reveal something significant-and otherwise unknown-about power's workings. Importantly, the temporal convergence of their respective projects fundamentally shifted intersectionality away from the multiple marginalization approach of the early era. For both Crenshaw and Collins, the race/gender intersection is the centerpiece of intersectional analysis; even as both gesture to the significance of other intersections, sexuality, class, nation, ethnicity, and a host of other structures of domination are under-theorized, if not entirely ignored, by their works. Indeed, both Crenshaw and Collins envision exposing black women's marginalization as the normative and political goal of intersectionality. Race and gender are imagined to intersect in ways that render black women multiply marginalized subjects whose experiences of the social world are marked by particular forms of subordination. This theoretical move places oppression at the center of black feminist understandings of black female subjectivity, and reifies the view that black women are the quintessential marginalized subjects. Of course, the early years were also interested in black women's "multiple jeopardy," their social location as multiply marginalized subjects; yet, what distinguishes the watershed years is that black women's experiences become emblematic of the worst forms of marginalization. Rather than attempting to stake out the complexities of black women's lives, black women's experiences become symbolic of the very worst forms of oppression.

#### Only a ground up focus has the ability to change the militarism mindset that is focus of US action

Ivie 7 (Robert L. Ivie [Professor: University of Indiana, Ph.D., Washington State University, Rhetorical Critique of U.S. public culture; democracy; war propaganda; peace-building communication]], Published 2007 by Kumarian Press, “Dissent from War”, PRINT, note: scanned and run through OCR software, mjb)

Indeed, militarism has become the mindset of American empire—the mindset, Andrew Bacevich argues, that seduces Americans to support a state of warfare. America has adopted the outlook of a security state, of an empire projecting its power worldwide rather than republic defending itself from foreign attack. The American people in an age of empire have become persuaded that their “safety and salvation lies with the sword.” The citizen army has become a professional “imperial army.” America’s “global military supremacy” has become central to its “national identity.” International problems are seen first and foremost as “military problems,” and military means are believed to be the way to reshape the world consistent with American values and the nation’s self-professed utopian ends, which are perceived in turn as “universal truths.” The very aesthetic of war is changing from an image of ugly, wasteful, and degrading brutality to a new, twenty-first century sport. In Bacevich’s blunt and considered assessment, contemporary America has fallen prey to militarism—romanticizing soldiers, fostering nostalgia for military ideals, and adopting military power as the measure of national greatness—to a “degree without precedent in US history.” ¶ The attitude of militarism that is running rampant in America, Bacevich maintains, is unlikely to disappear anytime soon” because, even though it is unprecedented in its current intensity, it has deeps roots in the nation’s past and, consistent with Michael Sherry’s observation, has reshaped American politics, foreign policy, economics, social relations, and general culture over the past half-century so much that it permeates all domains of life. The terrorist attacks of 9/11 gave “added impetus to already exiting tendencies”; America became more itself rather than something different after 9/11, increasingly adopting a militaristic ethos with broad support and too little dissent from mainstream political leaders and the general public. The present-day “infatuation with military power” is a bipartisan project and the handiwork of multiple and disparate groups of opinion leaders. Moreover, it has developed over the last several decades “in full view and with considerable popular approval.” Thus, Bacevich argues, “society at large. . .[cannot] abdicate responsibility for what has come to pass,” and what has come to pass is systemic, broad-based, and deeply ingrained in political culture rather than simply the outcome of a particular presidential election, the fault of an individual president, or the scheming of a single set of presidential advisors. A late turning of public option in the fall elections of 2006 against a stymied occupation of Iraq, we might conclude, reflects impatience with a particular war, not a basic transformation of the war culture. ¶ The image of an imperial army fighting continuous wars of empire does not inspire confidence that an ingrained system of militarism can be changed, habits of war broken, the conscience of a nation restored, or a culture of peace established. Indeed, political theorists Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri maintain that contemporary imperial warfare is perpetual because it functions to sustain the status-quo network of global power relations. War, they argue, is inevitable in a condition of “Empire” and constant as an instrument of rule.” It is the “general matrix for all relations of power and techniques of domination,” a “form of rule” for controlling populations and shaping “all aspects of social life,” Imperial war today regulates life in general and legitimizes itself in the process by propagandizing “the constant presence of an enemy and the threat of disorder.” The “presence of the enemy,” they note, “demonstrates the need for security.” The imagined presence of an enemy is crucial to the system and motive of war. ¶ Making evil enemies present by means of dehumanizing propaganda—propaganda that defies the US as it demonizes the nation’s adversaries—is a destructive ritual of redemption by vicarious sacrifice. It produces the heightened perception of a threat and intensified sense of national insecurity that motivates and excuses a call to arms. Evil, as in the image of an enemy evildoer, is the ultimate symbol of bedlam, babble, and disarray—the Biblical monster of chaos. In a condition of empire and imperial warfare, then, the routine rationalization for resorting to violence is to preserve global order against supposedly evil forces of disorder. This “abuse of evil”—this “discourse of good and evil [that] lacks nuance subtlety, and judicious discrimination”—Richard Bernstein insists is “extremely dangerous in a complex and precarious world” because it stifles thinking instead of promoting us to question and think. For this purpose, war rules. ¶ Yet, resisting the rule of war is possible, according to Hardt and Negri, despite the dominant mindset of militarism in a controlling paradigm of empire that bases politics on coercion and violence. Indeed, resisting war is “the most important task for resistance today.” They content it is reasonable to imagine, under emerging conditions of desire for democracy, peace, and justice, that a multitude of ordinary people might contest militarism through cooperation and communication—what Hardt and Negri call “singularities” acting in common with deference to their differences and without reduction to a “unity”—may well erode the order of Empire to achieve a “peaceful life in common.” The need for peace corresponds with the need for enriched democracy to overcome “the global state of war.” To be sure, “the only democracy that makes sense today is the one that poses peace as its highest value.” ¶ Consistent with Hardt And Negri and for the purpose of working toward a peacebuilding culture, democracy is usefully understood as a practice of collective self-rule constituted by matrices of individuals cooperating and communicating with one another at multiple points of intersection to produce fair and equitable social relations within and against a recalcitrant system of empire, a system of empire that relies on incessant violence and legitimizing images of evildoers to maintain a status-quo relations of global power. Democracy is expressed most directly, acutely, and cogently in collaborative acts of resistance to enemy-making discourses. Surely, as a guiding model for contesting the mindset of militarism, the vision of resisting dehumanizing propaganda by cultivating matrices of democratic dissent makes the prospect of building peace and inhibiting war more plausible over the long haul and less daunting in immediate circumstances. ¶ Understood as constructive democratic resistance, dissent evokes the more judicious and relatively sustainable expectation that acts of peacebuilding can be augmented collectively and habits of war attenuated over time. Dissent cultivates democratic relations and coordinated resistance from the ground up by producing, humanizing acts of identification, that is, acts of communication and coordination that articulate practical points of intersection without effacing the distinguishing identities, cultures, religions, or nationalities of cooperating parties. constructing intersecting points—points to be held in common by those who would oppose the war regime—is a bridging action rather than a fusing process. It is not an attempt to eliminate pluralism, diminish defining differences, or achieve a structured unity in which relative merit is determined for example, by how white or rich or Christian or Western or American a given category of people Is perceived to be. Thus, peacebuilding activism and dissent from war can be imagined as a sustained boundary-spanning project of decentralized and overlapping networks of democratic resistance to the habit of dehumanizing propaganda.

#### Deliberative democracy via the public sphere is necessary to undertake any analysis of identity since bodies are tied to the discourses surrounding them.

Dryzek 5 (John S., professor in the Social and Political Theory Program, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University, Deliberative Democracy in Divided Societies: Alternatives to Agonism and Analgesia, Political Theory, Vol. 33, No. 2 (Apr., 2005))

Agonists believe deliberative democracy cannot deal with divisive issues because it is too constraining in the kind of communication it allows. Consociationalists believe deliberative democracy cannot deal with divisive issues because it is too open to diverse claims and claimants. Deliberative democracy can be defended against both sides, but it has to take them seriously, and be prepared to take elements from each. On the face of it this ought to be impossible, given their diametric opposition. The key is a differentiation of political sites within a society that agonists and consociationalists alike have not contemplated: the former because they address only politics in the abstract rather than its institutional specifics, the latter because they see only a politics tightly attached to the state. Deliberative democracy can process contentious issues in a politics of engagement in the public sphere, even if it has problems doing so when it comes to deliberation within the institutions of the state. In this light, a conception of discursive democracy in terms of a public sphere that is home to constellations of discourses can be brought to bear.22 A discourse can be understood as a shared way of making sense of the world embedded in language. Thus any given discourse will be defined by assumptions, judgments, contentions, dispositions, and capabilities. These shared terms enable subscribers to a given discourse to recognize and convert sensory inputs into coherent accounts of situations. These accounts can then be shared in intersubjectively meaningful fashion. Thus discourses feature storylines, involving opinions about facts and values. Familiar examples of such discourses include market liberalism (dominant in global economic affairs) and sustainable development (ubiquitous in environmental affairs). The content of collective decisions depends strongly (but not exclusively) on the relative weight of competing discourses in a domain. For example, the content of criminal justice policy varies with the weight of discourses stress- ing, respectively, the psychopathology of the criminal mind, rational calcula- tion of the costs and benefits of criminal acts by perpetrators, and the circum- stances of poverty that lead individuals to a life of crime. The engagement of discourses and its provisional outcomes are democratic to the degree they are under dispersed influence of competent actors, as opposed to manipulation by propagandists, spin doctors, and corporate advertisers. The possibility of contestation and engagement means discourses have to be treated as less totalizing and constraining than some followers of Michel Foucault claim. Discourses must be amenable to reflection, if only at the margins. The requisite communication is deliberation not agonism because it is oriented to persuasion rather than conversion, and it retains some connection (however loose) to collective decision. Some recent treatments of deliberative democracy do, then, meet the ago- nist's critique.23 Agonists see deliberation as deadening and biased in the kind of communication it allows. But the engagement of discourses can accommodate many kinds of communication beyond reasoned argument, including rhetoric, testimony, performance, gossip, and jokes. However, three tests must be applied to secure the intersubjective understanding prized by deliberative democrats. Once we move beyond ritualistic openings, communication is required to be first, capable of inducing reflection; second, noncoercive; and third, capable of linking the particular experience of an individual or group with some more general point or principle.24 The last of these three criteria is crucial when it comes to identity politics gone bad. A harrowing story of (say) rape and murder in a Bosnian village can be told in terms of guilt of one ethnic group and violated innocence of another-fuel for revenge. But the story can also be told in terms of violation of basic princi- ples of humanity that apply to all ethnicities, making reconciliation at least conceivable (though not easy). How can this discursive approach be applied to divided societies? To begin, taking identities seriously means allowing different communicative forms that can accompany particular identities; this is Young's connection. However, this recognition often helps little when it comes to deeply divided societies, because, as Moore points out, societies deeply divided in identity are often not divided at all in culture.25 Culturally, there are few differences between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, and between Serbs, Croats, and the world's most secular Muslim community in former Yugoslavia. It is, then, a mistake to treat identity conflicts as merely a matter of multiculturalism. This treatment of identity in terms of culture extends even to Benhabib's defense of universalist deliberative democracy against cultural relativism.26 She accepts that "culture has become a ubiquitous synonym for identity, an identity marker and differentiator,"27 even as she "pleads for recognition of the radical hybridity and polyvocality of all cultures"28 that facilitates deliberation both within and across groups.29 Identities are bound up with discourses.