Ideographs and American Mass Media: Understanding the Narrative on the Israel-Palestine Conflict and its Influence on Publics

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IDEOGRAPHS AND AMERICAN MASS MEDIA: UNDERSTANDING THE NARRATIVE ON THE ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT AND ITS INFLUENCE ON PUBLICS

Savanna Lynn Fowler

98 Pages

This thesis analyzes the American mass media’s narrative on the Israel-Palestine conflict to understand the power of ideographs and their influence on specific publics. I focus on two popular ideographs in mass media reporting, <terrorism> and <democracy>, in order to examine how these ideographs are utilized to construct a narrative for the media’s publics, the political ideologies they represent, the agendas they further, and the consequences their narrow use has on developing countercultures and emerging alternative narratives around the conflict. I focus my attention on the mass media’s coverage of a sixteen day Israeli shelling in Gaza and how public consent is acquired by implementing ideographs as ideological representations. I employ McGee’s (1980) discussion of the ideograph’s historic and social dimensions to inform my analysis. Ultimately, I argue that the mass media’s use of these ideographs results in a narrow construction of both the conflict and the Middle East for its corresponding publics, preventing the rhetoricity of countercultures and discouraging public dissent.
KEYWORDS: Ideograph, Ideology, Israel-Palestine, Mass Media, McGee, Rhetoric
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INFLUENCE ON PUBLICS

SAVANNA LYNN FOWLER

A Thesis Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements
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IDEOGRAPHS AND AMERICAN MASS MEDIA: UNDERSTANDING THE NARRATIVE ON THE ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT AND ITS INFLUENCE ON PUBLICS

SAVANNA LYNN FOWLER

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S. L. F.
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CHAPTER I
TALKING TODAY: THE UNITED STATES AND THE CURRENT NARRATIVE OF THE ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT

Introduction

This project analyzes the use, influence, and power of one rhetorical concept in American mass media—the ideograph—as a way to understand the ideological beliefs and actions of publics. The ideograph is the articulation of ideas, the representation of an ideology that works to rhetorically persuade the social masses while guaranteeing its survival through audience’s subsequent conversations and various texts in the public sphere. Because the mass media frequently employs ideographic terms in their reporting, understanding the ideologies that comprise the meaning of these terms is necessary to comprehend what actions the media is justifying and how they are employing ideographs to do so. It can also help examine the consequences of a public hegemony and the conditions that are repressing the natural emergence of counterpublics around issues of war and diplomacy. In order to best explore the mass media’s rhetorical strategy with ideographs, I focus my analysis on their coverage of the 16 day shelling of Palestine by the Israeli military in the summer of 2014. The mass media’s coverage around the summer bombings provides a fertile ground of analysis due to its frequent and aggressive use of ideographs to assign blame in the wake of escalated hostilities between the two countries. The mass media also employs these ideographs to discourage the proliferation of information that does not align with their ideological viewpoint, tampering with the
minds and beliefs of their devoted publics.

The term media is incredibly broad. Even with this project’s focus on mass media, there are still several media available for communication including radio, blogs, podcasts, and others. Because it is impossible to analyze all forms of American mass media, I will limit my analysis to the televised and social media efforts of corporate owned media. Since many Americans still collect their information from mass media hubs, a majority of the artifacts of analysis consist of clips from popular American mass media platforms, such as CNN, FOX NEWS, MSNBC, and ABC news. The cohesive element that binds these clips together is their blatant use of <terrorism>1 and <democracy> to communicate an ideological agenda. The mass media’s reporting purposefully prevents the emergence of an oppositional narrative that their viewers could encounter and ascribe to. It is worth noting that while the mass media remains the first choice for news, their viewers do not account for all publics and public opinion. The publics discussed and referred to throughout this project are those that identify with the media, the ideas it supports, the information it provides, and the status it aims to preserve. Mass media publics are diverse. They are democrats, republicans, men, women, Caucasian, African American, southerners, northerners, tall, short, young, and old. Yet, the statistical diversity of a public is irrelevant. What joins these groups together is the circulation of the media’s address of their beliefs and their viewing the media as a trusted source of information. However, not every American trusts or watches American mass media. There are publics that oppose or counter the mass media’s beliefs. These publics are known as

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1 Ideographs are typically enclosed in these brackets to help differentiate them as a special grammar. McGee likens the symbol of the ideograph to Chinese symbols, which he says both signify and “contain” a unique ideological commitment (7). The brackets then work to separate ideographs from our basic vocabulary and emphasize its status as another form of vocabulary.
counterpublics. Mass media counterpublics, while coming into contact with mass media reporting, don’t embrace its ideology, but rely on other news outlets. The idea behind Counterpublics and those of Israel-Palestine reporting are addressed in the last chapter. For now, it suffices to say that not everyone who sees mass media embraces its ideas. Because of these counterpublics, it would be erroneous to imply that phrases like public opinion or American mass media include everyone who calls The United States their home.

Thus, this thesis uses the ideographs <terrorism> and <democracy> to show how consent for the current hegemonic narrative on Israel-Palestine is acquired through rhetorical methods and the effects that this narrative has on mass media publics. Using the ideograph as a lens of analysis allows me to make three specific moves. First, I will show how the current hegemony and its ideologies rhetorically reduce the communities of the Middle East to Radical Islamic terrorists and natural enemies of the United States’ democratic aspirations. After analyzing this rhetorical trend, I will discuss the historical and social dimensions of the dominant rhetorical rationale and its influence on the American media’s depiction of the Palestinian people, their rights, and their value in relation to our Israeli allies. Finally, I will use sources outside of the mass media to create a narrative that depicts Gazans as endangered civilians rather than fundamental terrorists. Because the association among Americans, Palestinians, and Gazans has had decades to unfurl, it is impossible to capture the entirety of their complex, intertwined history within the scope of this project.
Ideographs and Hegemony

Coined by rhetorical scholar Michael Calvin McGee, the ideograph is the link between the ideology of a public and its presence in their subsequent discourse. An ideograph is a term that uses an abstract meaning to represent and communicate the ideological beliefs and agendas of a public. Because of its ability to destabilize the often unquestioned ideas of common sense, Truth, “the way things are,” and other phrases that protect ideologies from criticism, the philosophy of the ideograph is often mentioned in tandem with Karl Marx and his definition of ideology as false consciousness. And while this project agrees with Marx’s vision of a diverse and powerful non-elite society, it does not stop at the binary between elite and non-elite ideology. I understand ideology not simply as false consciousness. Rather, ideologies are present in every mind’s worldview as they are the way that ideas work and prevail in a thinking individual. They shift in the minds of individuals depending on what information is allowed to make noise and receive feedback. To agree with McGee, “The falsity of an ideology is specifically rhetorical” (McGee 4).

The use of the ideograph necessitates a discussion on hegemonic structures. Hegemony is a relationship between the dominant and dominated. It is the process of maintaining the systems of values that shape peoples’ perceptions of their reality. Antonio Gramsci’s work on hegemony remains profoundly important, especially his discussions on the functions of social hegemony. Gramsci’s most relevant hegemonic function is that of acquiescence, what he calls the “‘spontaneous’ consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group” (5). Elaborating on Gramsci’s idea of hegemonic consent is Jennifer
Daryl Slack, who attributes given consent to ideology. Claiming that ideology is the way to acquire consent, Slack writes that it is “conceived” (9) out of the “articulation of disparate elements” (9), whose effective communication to publics garner their participation in the production of the hegemony. Cultural theorists such as Stuart Hall see articulation as a “process of creating connections” (Slack 5), connections that, because they have no necessary “belongingness” (Hall 141), can be rearticulated in a myriad of ways. In other words, because the connections between ideologies are rhetorically constructed rather than absolute, the rhetorical appeals of written, visual, and audio texts can be examined, the communicated ideologies denaturalized, the dominance of these articulated relations realized, and its effects on the public sphere understood. Because this relationship is rhetorical, we can understand consent and the maintenance of seemingly inclusive and egalitarian hegemonies by examining when and how these articulations are used. With the rhetorical surpassing the material in terms of certainty and truth, Gramsci would probably say that what is certain is gone and “what is ‘true’ will be a truth only of word; that is to say, precisely, rhetoric” (8).

Because a cultural hegemony requires great and continuous effort to become a seemingly natural part of the working universe, the forces that a hegemony works to combat is a vital starting point in realizing the constructed and overwhelmingly subjective nature of society’s meta terms. The present day mass media works to naturalize their ideologies by discouraging critique or doubt from its publics while constantly reaffirming its beliefs. These ideas include: the duty of Americans to support pro-Zionist policies, the dangers of the Arab world and its people, and the still unhealed scars from September 11th that justify extended involvement in the Middle East. Then
there are the frequently excluded texts: first-hand accounts of the humanitarian atrocities happening in Gaza amidst the longest military occupation of the modern world, images and commentary that focus on the devastated lives of citizens rather than the actions of Hamas, statistics, and data that go unreported during this war on terror. Reporting these realities alongside the standard mass media report could expose audiences to the hellish fates of forgotten Gazans who are overshadowed by god, politics, and The World Trade Center. Such a report runs the risk of public dissent amongst mass media audiences and of hegemonic collapse. Mass media works to discourage its viewers of this dissent in order to reproduce its dominance, assuring audience consent.

**The American Mass Media’s Reporting on Israel-Palestine**

Ideology works by deciding what individuals believe to be possible. Audiences and rhetors reinforce and spread their ideological beliefs to other audiences through communication, allowing the potential and veracity of their words to be weighed by others. The democratic nature of the public sphere breaks down when representation is not available to all participants in the global conversation and one ideology begins to dominate all others. In the modern day public sphere, this domination is easier than ever to accomplish via advertising, the speed of technology, and the connectedness it has facilitated for the world. No platform is as lethal a mixture of outreach, voice, and advertising as the American mass media. Depending on the power of the voice or information outlet, an ideology and its ideographic offspring can take up far greater space in the public sphere than is typical, figuratively crowding and pushing out naturally emerging narratives. Narratives that counter the longevity of the dominant ideology or hegemony are inevitably pushed out, preventing viewers from hearing the other sides of
the story. Arguably, the media provides some of the most comprehensive opportunities for voicing and circulating its endorsed ideologies. American mass media in particular is a juggernaut in selling the beliefs of the powerful. Criticism of the mass media machine frequently cautions audiences that their advertising power for ideological platforms has reached a level of influence that is impossible to escape completely. Mass media critique leaves us with the idea that because the system has become so permeated by a small set of beliefs as well as fine-tuned to reproduce them that the social mass has no choice but to breathe in ideas that do not represent their embodied knowledge. Despite this knowledge, droves of citizens still trust the corporate owned media to represent their concerns and deliver their information. Foreboding information is never easily received, which could explain why, despite the current distrust of government in the United States, their official platforms of action, exceptionalism, and patriotic determination are sought out by the social masses. Whatever the reason, American mass media has become masterful in reproducing and maintaining the status quo through the dominance of information circulation. Ideographs are a large part of this reproduction in terms of political language. They also facilitate the overwhelming social influence of the mass media, allowing it to demonstrate its power and potential within the public sphere.

No one need look further than the current topic of Israel-Palestine to see the mass media’s use of ideographs. The conception of the Israel-Palestine conflict in the United States has been heavily influenced by the American twenty-four-hour news cycle. The ideographs around the Middle East have had a long, uncontested, rhetorical life, a fact made all the more obvious by their continuing presence in supposedly objective journalism. The ideographs used presently are <terrorism> and <democracy>, the former
pertaining to the image of the post September 11th Arab, and the latter referring to America and the antithesis of the Orient. Prior to September 11th, two previous versions of these ideographs dominated the ideological conversation between the West and the Middle East, <west> and <Islam>. Though these previous ideographs imply a dramatic difference in worldview (the West is known for its democratic model and separation of church and state while Islam implies a now antiquated theocratic form of government), they do not communicate the same aggressive binary relationship that is found in our current ideographs.

Consider the rhetoric in the aftermath of the attack: President George W. Bush’s speech to the nation, given on September 11th utilized the phrase “terrorist attacks” while Osama Bin Laden’s video message was soon aired, cementing the status of those involved as terrorists rather than another equally disobedient term. Bush’s speech also heavily characterized the United States as the victim of freedom haters, once in his opening statement, “Today, our fellow citizens, our way of life, our very freedom came under attack” (CNN.com) and again in his explanation of the attack, “America was targeted for attack because we’re the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world” (CNN.com). Both of these statements show Bush using the idea of freedom to characterize the West’s form of democracy, while constructing the entire Islamic world as terrorists who are attempting to stop the spread of American-"esque" freedom.

Phrases such as these provide an example of how ideographs shift forms and still retain the ideological beliefs of their previous incarnations. While <west> and <Islam> refer to the differences between the region’s governing philosophies, <democracy> and <terrorism> designate which spheres do what. This creates an adversarial relationship by
defining the two regions as fundamentally opposed based on the actions of their
governing bodies. This is exactly how these ideographs have been exercised: as
restrictive rhetorical screens that have directed the conversation toward innately violent
characteristics of Middle Eastern civilizations rather than the social conditions that are
producing the devastation of the region and its citizens. Because ideographs emerge at the
intersection of history and modern society, it is accurate to say that this shift to a more
adversarial ideographic binary both influenced and was influenced by the narrative of the
anti-democratic Middle East and the endless numbers of fundamental Islamic terrorists
reported to reside there.

**Literature Review**

Scholars of rhetorical studies have taken up McGee’s concept of the ideograph to
explain various social phenomena. In her *Rhetoric Review* article, Jessica Enoch uses the
ideograph to explore the idea of <home> during World War II and the ideologies that
dictated the system’s response to women working outside of the home as a much needed
part of the war effort. Enoch relies on the ideograph to answer the questions of how the
childcare centers of WWII were able to lose public support as quickly as they were able
to accrue it. With the influx of women into the workplace, the United States was forced to
establish childcare centers which directly challenged the previously established definition
of <home>, an “ideal, imagined and feminized space” (Enoch 3) that ultimately worked
to classify “suitable childcare options for mothers, affecting and directing their
experiences as workers inside and outside the family residence” (Enoch 3). Explaining
ideographs as understandings that are “elaborated and constrained through use and
circumstance” (7), Enoch uses the rhetorical nature of the ideograph to show the strategy
behind gaining support for childcare centers by subverting the gendered definitions that typically accompanied the idea of child rearing.

In “John Pym, Ideographs, and the Rhetoric of Opposition to the English Crown” Jim Kuypers and Matthew Althouse use the ideograph in a more positive light, illustrating how “those who maintain control over their use and meanings gain opportunities to achieve and utilize power” (229). The strength of their analysis is found in understanding the ideograph’s denotative meaning along with the ways ideographs articulate these meanings. Kuypers and Althouse demonstrate how the use of the ideograph shows discourse as a “transformative manifestation of changes in ideology and . . . public consciousness” (6) as well as takes an audience from simple Platonic rationale thinking to “creations” (6) which can be inserted into an argument as a legitimizing force (6). The authors use these definitions of the ideograph to illustrate the transformative power of language and ideologies in the public mind, lending support to the idea that while no one is free from the grasp of ideology, dominant world views can shift as rhetors work to create audiences through their use of rhetoric.

The work of Edward Said in Orientalism illustrates the ways in which ideographs work to conceptualize the Middle East. Published in 1979, Orientalism remains the standard in understanding the conversation around the Arab’s presence in the West. Few texts since have established a broad but coherent argument of the historical subjugation of the Arab identity. Although Said never explicitly mentions the ideograph (McGee would not coin the term for another year after the release of Orientalism), his area of focus lends itself to the exact type of analysis proposed by McGee. Amongst his numerous critiques, Said discusses the process that has left the Arab a one-dimensional reaper in American
minds. Said mentions the removal of Middle Eastern history, language, and culture from academia, the defining of the Arab through the Zionist narrative, and the wealth of information about the region in relationship to war, oil, bombs, and American intervention. More recently, the focus on American military campaigns and occupation of the Middle East has spread from the media to academia. The creep of media ideology into academia increases the number of publics who are learning that dissent from the mass media’s narrative is wrong. Said’s *Orientalism* marks one of the premiere instances where an intellectual openly endorsed the Palestinian right to statehood while drawing attention to the restrictive power of our current language in order to demand a different discourse from citizens. Academia and academic freedom have served as havens from hegemony for decades. To lose this platform would make impactful works like *Orientalism* impossible for public access and eliminate another platform for counterpublics.

An overwhelming majority of analyses on the media and/or the narratives around Israel-Palestine are found in the field of communication. A great deal of attention is devoted to analyzing the media in terms of representation and sources, along with the linguistic analysis of language. Alina Korn’s “Reporting Palestinian Casualties in the Israeli Press: the case of Haaretz and the intifada” traces the erasure of Palestinian death statistics in Israeli newspapers and the purposeful placement of these statistics to side pages and low traffic areas. These omissions, along with failure to report the overwhelming amount of Palestinian civilian deaths, are attributed to the media’s constant efforts in assigning terrorism a Palestinian face. Korn states that the media “contributed to the militarization of the conflict by presenting and defining the uprising
as an outburst of inexplicable violence and terrorism. At the same time, the media played
down Israeli violence and defined it in terms of a ‘mere reaction and self-defense’ (2).

Specific components of this project, such as the numerically unfair representation
enjoyed by Israeli guests and sources in the mass media are also well documented and
discussed. Lisa Thomas “Reconstructions of Reality” switches from statistics of the dead
to statements of the living with her analysis on sources utilized by the media in its
reporting. Focusing her discussion on the “historic” 2005 withdrawal of Israel from Gaza,
she argues that the coverage given to Israel’s withdrawal of Gaza as a step toward peace
worked to obscure the illegal settlements of Israel in the West Bank while drawing
attention to the Israeli point of view on the meaning of the withdrawal. In her overall
assessment, Thomas states that according to the analysis of BBC and ITV news coverage,
the chosen materials “failed to provide adequate historical context in their news reports,
which significantly distorted audiences’ perceptions of the conflict. Moreover, it was
found that Israelis were interviewed twice as many times as Palestinians and news
accounts tended to reiterate Israeli perspectives” (3). More importantly however, is her
mention of narrative and problems of representation that arise from media reporting. This
theme of representation frequently appears in journalism studies and several articles take
up the meaning of representation in their various ways.

In “The Conflicting Israeli Terrorist Image” Robert Handley analyzes the frequent
depiction of Arabs and Muslims as not only terrorists, but as terrorists even in situations
where they are the true victims of conflict with Israel. The most powerful part of
Handley’s analysis is his discussion on West Bank citizens being labeled as terrorists of
illegal Jewish residents, despite their house arrest, curfew, and intimidation by the
military guards that escorts Israelis in the West Bank. This reality for Palestinians has
prompted Handley to call for the cessation of “recasting deviating actors into their
stereotypic roles” (254) and for reporters to “retell a story” by “resuscitating a narrative”
(254). Handley is calling for further investigation into the devices that allow what is
called terrorism for any other group to be labeled as the right of protection for Israeli
occupants of Palestine. Ron Kuzar continues this work in representation by exploring the
Zionist agenda and its related discourse communities. His analysis also discusses the
power Zionism can acquire in both Israeli and American government action and rationale.
My own depiction of the role of Zionism is very similar to Kuzar’s in that we both see the
Jewish centrism in Zionism as a strong justification for the manifest destiny-esque agenda
behind the expansion of Israel. Kuzar also analyzes the religious roots of Zionism and its
dual claim of god-given land for Israelis while at the same time claiming that the
Palestinians are a “rootless, mostly nomad, mass of individuals who could readily join
their Arab brethren in the surrounding Middle East” (97). Kuzar’s most powerful
statement comes in his explanation of the relationship between Zionism and the Jewish
first nation. He writes that Zionism says the Holocaust is something that “should never
happen to the Jews again, and for that, every price is worth paying” (108). Kuzar writes
that this meaning of Zionism creates a “militaristic, xenophobic, racist ideology that is
expressed in Israel’s wrongdoings toward its Palestinian citizens and those in the
Occupied Territories” (108).

One of the most specific articles in terms of language is Leon Barkho’s “The
BBC’s Discursive Strategy and Practices Vis-à-vis the Palestinian-Israel Conflict,” which
analyzes media reporting on a purely linguistic level. Barkho’s overarching point is that
the syntax, word choices, and even sentence structures chosen by the media continuously reinforce the image of the Palestinian as an Arab terrorist. Barkho finds one of his foci in the term *militant*, which is habitually applied to Palestinian forces in direct contrast with the IDF, the Israeli Military. The use of this term serves several functions, the most integral being the inability for any other title to be applied to Palestinians who are facing a far larger and technologically sophisticated military. Barhko’s analysis works by linking its linguistic analysis to Fowler and Halliday, shifting the focus from communication to the power of discursive structures. However, what makes Barhko’s article so incredibly relevant to this project is his use of language analysis to “uncover the ideologies or sets of ideas which journalists introduce in their writings in order to make sense of their world” (278). Although his entry point is linguistics and mine the ideograph, both projects work to establish the connection between language and power.

**Chapter Outline**

As this is an ideographic analysis, chapters will center around two discussions: The first is analyzing the ideograph’s power and presence within our present day discourse. The second discussion centers around the creation of an alternative narrative and understanding what another shift in these ideographs could do for the so-far stagnant conversation around Israel-Palestine, Zionism, and a two state solution. Chapter two begins with the diachronic analysis of the ideographs and their traditional use in Western discourse. Because the ideograph is the intersection of history and present society, analysis of past discourse is required in order to understand current social phenomenon and emergence of discourse communities. Western activity in the Middle East has historically consisted of economic and military power plays, a fact made manifest by the
types of information the West propagates about the reality of the Middle East. The diachronic analysis focuses on the historically dominant narratives that have helped to construct the mass western worldview of the Middle East and the ideographs used to articulate it. Because the history between Israel-Palestine and Western powers is so far reaching, the analysis will focus primarily on the veins of discourse that are still advancing the agenda of the mass media. These narratives include the conflation of anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism, the superiority of free democracy over Middle Eastern political systems, and the image of the Arab as an oil-hoarding, anti-American, bearded, Islamic, antiquated barbarian who embodies the beliefs of the most fundamental sect of Islam. The chapter’s main goal is to show that the longevity of these discourse communities and the assumed meaning of <terrorism> and <democracy> are a result of ideographs.

Chapter three continues with the synchronic dimension of the ideograph by utilizing clips of mass media programs actively communicating through <terrorism> and <democracy>, ensuring the reproduction of the current hegemony through their rhetorical affects. The synchronic component finds meaning in the present day uptake of citizens and the discourse that has been synthesized from the forces of history and the conversation of the public sphere. The chapter also serves as an attempt to expand the concept of the ideograph from the explicitly stated to the words and ideas that are left unsaid and unrepresented in American mass media discourse. Recognizing this omission as deliberate, the idea of ideograph as absence exposes the agenda that is a part of what we say and do not say. It illuminates the strategy involved in selecting our words and their organization, and the concern for the potential ruin that can come from saying or not
saying what we are or are not supposed to. By framing the absence of diverse narratives as a choice with rhetorical consequences, the devastating suffocation of new and opposing opinions and its influence over the rhetorical typography of the public sphere can be better demonstrated.

Chapter four further addresses the project of articulating a narrative that has been lost amongst the veins of discourse in the Western world. While chapter three uses what is said to emphasize what is not, this chapter compiles that forgotten information into a cohesive narrative to introduce a potential line of discourse, as well as to show what these ideographs and their use rhetorically curtail. Utilizing the idea of absence from the previous chapter, the chapter uses a series of tragedies from a single summer to tell a story that the American mass media cycle has yet to deem newsworthy. The most important thing about this narrative is not only its freedom to finally be communicated outside of the incredible ideological advertising platform that is the media, but its capability in combating an adversarial story that has been brewing in the West since its initial contact with the Orient. By placing the realities and concerns of Gazan citizens at the forefront, a rarity in the oil war propaganda age, the bragging rights, and manifest destiny--esque rationale of the occident loses its patriotic energy while ceasing to make civilized and humanitarian sense.
CHAPTER II

DIACHRONIC IDEOGRAPHS: HISTORIC IDEOLOGIES AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO OUR CURRENT IDEOGRAPHHS

Introduction

This chapter begins the discussion on ideographs by addressing the diachronic or historical component of an ideograph. The reasons for this historical trace are simple: the roots of the ideograph must be understood in order to comprehend the tremendous impact of its current form. In “Ideographs: The Link between Rhetoric and Ideology,” the essay that established the ideograph, Michael Calvin McGee characterizes the diachronic force of the ideograph as inescapable. He writes, “Because these terms are definitive of the society we have inherited, they are conditions of the society into which each of us is born, material ideas we must accept to belong” (McGee 9). The diachronic forces of the ideograph allow rhetors to justify now by what was said then (McGee 12). With the diachronic force, all that is required to bestow meaning and create activity is to “mine history for touchstones [and] precedents,” (McGee 10), referencing situationally similar historical events that have the chosen ideograph as the “structuring principle” (McGee 10). This is because the diachronic is ruled by time, meaning that tracing the historical touchstones, recognizing the natural replacement of one ideograph by another, and understanding the exchange of one reality for another, is crucial for analysis.

The chapter begins by introducing the diachronic element of the ideograph and then analyzing how the diachronic forces influence the ideological meanings of the
<west>/<Islam> and <democracy>/<terrorism> binaries. While <democracy> and <terrorism> are the primary ideographs at work today in media discourse, they emerged from their previous incarnations, <west> and <Islam> after the events of September 11\textsuperscript{th}. The ideograph’s ability to preserve and transport political ideologies stems from the diachronic element. The diachronic finds meaning in the historical use of ideographs, allowing rhetors to search history and incorporate previous uses of the ideograph as justification for their ideas. Consequently, the events that prompt the turn from one set of narrow ideographs to another will also be available as historical justification for belief.

I will then explicate specific ideologies that comprise the meanings of these ideographic terms and analyze their histories in Western policy. Because it is impossible to analyze every twist and turn that comprises Israel-Palestine’s tumultuous past, I will adopt a more narrow focus in terms of time and circumstance and analyze what I believe to be the most prominently emphasized parts of their long history.

Finally, I will use what is known as a visual ideograph to serve as an example of how the <west>/<Islam> and <democracy>/<terrorism> binary is used to illustrate what is possible in the world and how a rhetorical device can come to challenge hegemonic political ideologies. The visual is used for two reasons: First as an example of how to break from the oppressive meanings of these two ideographic binary sets which have primed the Middle East for false representation and cultural oppression. Second, to possibly introduce new ideographs to understand the relationship between Israel and Palestine. Ultimately, I will use visual ideographs to argue that the existence of the current Israel-Palestine narrative owes itself to the diachronic forces of the ideograph and the knowledge derived from their evolution over a period of time.
The Ideograph

Ideographs are seemingly commonplace terms in everyday discourse that not only reveal and substantiate but also shape and shift ideological investments. In “The Ideograph”: A Link Between Rhetoric and Ideology,” McGee defines the ideograph as a “theoretical model which accounts for both ideology and myth” (4). While ideographs may be initially viewed as ordinary nomenclature, they often represent “the normative, collective commitments of the members of a public. Ideographs frequently appear in public argument as the necessary motivations or justifications for an action performed in the name of the public” (Murphy 423). Though ideographs are part of everyday vocabulary and conversation, their function transcends simply that of a symbol. Ideographs typically emerge from ideas that carry an intrinsic force from which they then obtain greater abstract meanings. Ideographs help to translate the ideological meanings of deeply entrenched values such as ethics, morality, identity, and belonging.

Thus, ideographs function as the persuasive elements in understanding and eventually accepting specific narratives and truths on public issues. And while this acceptance helps to us to define how we see our world, the presence of the ideograph also implies that these definitions are continuous with understandings we have had before. McGee writes, “They [ideographs] penalize us, in a sense, as much as they protect us, for they prohibit our appreciation of an alternative pattern of meaning” (McGee 9). The prohibition on alternative narratives results in a reproduction of the previous narrative, a recreation of yesteryear.

McGee emphasizes the material implications ideographs create when he asserts that “The important fact about ideographs is that they exist in real discourse, functioning
clearly and evidently as agents of political consciousness. They are not invented by observers; they come to be a part of the real lives of the people whose motives they articulate” (7). These articulations are the languages and discourses that help make the connection between an idea and what an observer believes it represents in their world. Because ideographs are casually used in everyday life, they have the potential for an incredibly long rhetorical lifespan, with shifts in ideographs only preserving and absorbing all the meanings and ideologies buried in its previous incarnation. This longevity allows the ideograph to adapt and thrive within discourse communities, bestowing it with ever greater definition and functions within that community.

In “Can You Be Patriotic and Oppose the War? Arguments to Co-Opt and Refute the Ideograph of Patriotism,” Heidi Hamilton attributes the power of contrasting ideographs (8-9). This contrast between ideographs creates both a binary relationship and a hierarchical system in which one ideograph denotes a more worthy and powerful state or label over another. This hierarchical system can be seen in the history between the West and the Middle East, which is most often characterized by violent excursions and decades of war. Critics make the point that American and other western allies are never presented with anything but the image of the violent bearded Arab\(^2\). How are we to\(^2\) Part of the mainstream narrative’s work is reinforcing the westerner’s association of Middle Easterners with male terrorist figures. The focus on male, dangerous, figures has resulted in a frequent use of gendered terms to construct a fear of the Middle East in both public and academic spheres. While groups of women in the Middle East work for terrorist groups or to impose the rule of fundamental Islam, they are rarely constructed as dangerous or feared figures. Rarely did literature portray Middle Eastern women as anything but political bargaining chips or sub-human hostages that require western military intervention. In terms of this project, I used the established vocabulary as I had never seen an example of constructing women as we construct men. For an example of Middle Eastern women in literature, see Dana L. Cloud’s “To Veil the Threat of Terror”: Afghan Women and the <Clash of Civilizations> in the Imagery of the U.S. War on
imagine the Arab world as our comrade if we have no representation of how to go about establishing this relationship or recognizing what it could possibly look like? If representations of friendship between these two worlds are never shown, people can never begin to believe that civility and cooperation are possible.

Edward Said’s *Orientalism* explains the creation of the oppositional ideographs of the Arab world and the Occident as innate enemies. Said’s argument is that the understanding of *west* and *Islam* stems from the Occident’s construction of the West-Middle East dichotomy: that United States-Middle East incongruity is the result of Islam rather than the Occident’s relentless oppression of the Arab world. Said writes that the Arab and his land have always been under the control of the Occident since their initial contact. The exhausting number of wars, interventions, crusades, projects, missiles, criticism, and vilification that are associated with the Middle East helps to solidify the enemy status of Middle Easterners. When Middle Easterners have acted in defiance of this oppression, their resistance infuriates the Occident. The Occident then sees this defiance of civilized Christianity as the barbarism of Islam. By conceptualizing the clash of Western Christianity and Eastern Islam the Occident can condemn the Orient as the lesser which then allows the Occident to attribute Oriental resistance to the practice of a false, barbaric religion.

It is unsettling to think that the history of the Middle East is represented as war and fundamentalism. But the ideographs of *west* and *Islam* do more than just decide which parts of history are worthy of being remembered. As carriers of ideological baggage, ideographs help to both motivate and communicate the specific worldviews of Terrorism.
individuals and groups, representing the group’s reality and constructing acquiescence for their subsequent decisions. Buried in the usage of the <west>/<Islam> binary is the assumption that to be a true American citizen you have to embrace this binary. The mass media works to perpetuate this line of reasoning. It uses ideographs to convince its audiences that a true American will construct the Middle East as an exotic and dangerous land, with all of its people jealous of the progress and prosperity of the West, and covetous of its immediate destruction. Convincing audiences to view the entire Middle Eastern region as a threat to the American way reflects the agenda of the media. These ideographic terms only work when the Orient and Occident are locked in battle, each battling for the glory of their motherland and all of their abstractness. This needed opposition forces the media to emphasize a narrative of West-Middle East incompatibility and incongruity, all to ensure publics’ repetition and ingestion of specific ideographs. By looking at the ideological systems that help construct the meaning of these ideographs, we can better recognize ideographs that are used in the mass media to justify action for itself and its audiences.

There was a discernable shift in language following the attacks of September 11th and the beginning of the Iraq war. What used to be a binary of <west> and <Islam>, rapidly changed into the rhetorical constructions of <democracy> and <terrorism>. While the change in ideographic terms encouraged the nation to conceptualize September 11th and the Middle East in new ways, this shift to new terms doesn’t negate the ideological influence of <west> and <Islam>. The diachronic understanding of an ideograph explains that the changes undergone by ideographs are made possible by previously articulated ideologies. This means that the public’s understanding of <terrorism> and <democracy>
could not have been possible without the work of <west> and <Islam> before it.

The reverence for American freedom was already a part of <west>/<Islam> binary as a factor that separated the Occident from the more theocratic forms of government in the Middle East. This rhetorical shift quickly entered into the media’s reporting, providing the rhetorical link between us and them. Very soon, the rhetorical construction of Al-Qaida’s motivations rested on the hatred of America’s democratic government and freedoms.

George W. Bush’s first speech to the nation after the attacks of September 11th and his emphasis on freedom and terrorism sets the rhetorical precedent that aided in the emergence of the new ideographic binary, <democracy>/<terrorism>. Bush immediately establishes a new understanding in the opening lines of his speech: “Today, our fellow citizens, our way of life, our very freedom came under attack in a series of deliberate and deadly terrorist acts” (CNN.com). This is the statement that transitions the understanding of the Occident-Orient relationship from <west>/<Islam> to <democracy>/<terrorism>. Bush’s description of the West as “a beacon for freedom” (CNN.com) i.e. democracy and the East as perpetrators of “despicable acts of terror” (CNN.com) are repeated throughout the speech. Bush states, “We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them” (CNN.com). Here is where the new content of <democracy>/<terrorism> replaces and builds upon the content of <west>/<Islam>. What becomes the content of the word terrorism is no longer individual terrorists, but its Middle Eastern counties. Bush’s nuanced use of <terrorism> encourages equating the entire Middle East to an individual group of terrorists and diversity disappears for Middle Easterners.
Bush continues to construct the new <democracy>/<terrorism> binary in subsequent speeches, including his 2003 war ultimatum speech on the necessity of attacking Iraq. Here again is the constructed contrast between the free and peaceful people of the United States and the terrorists/dictators of the Middle East. Americans are “peaceful people” (TheGuardian.com) who have conducted their relationship with Iraq in good faith. He describes the Iraqi regime as “not…peaceful men” (TheGuardian.com), whose country has a “deep hatred of America” and has “aided, trained and harbored terrorists, including operatives of al Qaeda” (TheGuardian.com). Again, Bush is attempting to normalize the new binary by repeating the differences between Americans and Iraqis and their government, as well as equating American’s and Iraqi’s with the actions of their government. While Bush assures the Iraqi people that a military campaign will be “directed against the lawless men who rule your country” and constructs the country itself as benefitting from military intervention, he directly addresses Iraqi citizens by prophesying that “the day of your liberation is near” (TheGuardian.com).

Saddam Hussein and “terrorists groups” continue to serve as justification for the Occident’s newest venture into the Orient. Bush’s statements that “the terrorist threat to America and the world will be diminished the moment that Saddam Hussein is disarmed,” and that The Department of Homeland Security and governors have “increased armed security at critical facilities across America” implies that the terrorist threat is real and attacks on the United States are on the way. Therefore, the United States must bypass self-defense and attack “terrorists and terror states that do not reveal…threats with fair notice” (TheGuardian.com). In other words, the United States must fight for freedom now and distinguish terrorists groups from allies later. However,
when Bush says the United States will strike “our enemies…and all who have aided them” it becomes clear that the separation between lawless men who rule countries and the countries where they rule is not going to happen. The attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq, as opposed to Al-Qaeda are proof of this newly crafted homogenous construction for Middle Eastern countries. The same is true for the invasion of Iraq. While the terrorist plot may have been developed in Afghanistan or Iraq, the countries themselves are not responsible for the events of September 11th. However, Bush’s statements allow the new binary of <democracy>/<terrorism> to incorporate an understanding of regions as connected to the acts of its individuals. The equating of individual acts to the act of their home country then grants the United States permission to imperialize the region.

After Bush’s freedom logic began running on the 24 hours mass media networks, publics were inundated with this narrative. Repeatedly airing this logic to mass media publics accomplished a great deal in dissuading other opinions. Those who criticized another American expedition into the Middle East or those who cautioned patience in the aftermath were branded as unpatriotic and disrespectful by mass media. Publics of the mass media then assumed freedom to be the sole definition of democracy as well as its most desired result. The mass media’s intense circulation of this particular nuanced meaning of the new <democracy>/<Terrorist> and its erasure of other interpretations created publics who believed installing a democratic government that bequeaths their freedom to the Middle East to be a necessity for ending terrorism. Consequently, the freedom that comes from exporting democracy became the rhetorical catalyst for the emergence of the new ideographs.

The media’s negative construction of dissenters not only shaped publics’
rhetorical response, but also determined the rationale for action. Soon after Bush’s speeches came Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom respectively, along with plans for what is now Freedom Tower to stand in the shadow of the World Trade Center. All of this activity would have been impossible had the historically emphasized ideologies of the <west>/<Islam> been different. The <west>/<Islam> binary allows people not to feel anything by othering the Arab and to see them as a follower of barbarous Islam. Consequently, the United States had the authority to attack de-humanized Arabs without mourning the casualties. What the shift from <west>/<Islam> to <democracy>/<terrorism> allows the United States to do is attack a state based on the acts of individuals. No longer does the United States have to attack the state and its state military. Now, one state can attack another simply because wanted individuals live there. There is no distinguishing between civilians and the faceless terrorist. Terrorism could be anywhere and anyone. Thus, a state can target anything it wants as long as they call it terrorism by terrorists. It is, undeniably, a war without end. The degrees of separation between the details are minute, yet the difference of ideas they convey are massive. As it stands, the <west>/<Islam> binary that was formed years before September 11th determined the bulk of the American political response by providing this ideological rationale. This is the diachronic at work.

**The Reverence of Freedom in the Western World**

Now I am going to talk about Israel and Palestine and what actions the meanings of these ideographs frame as possible. Ideology works by defining what is possible and what is impossible, what we can see and what we can’t see. Without a concrete understanding of what an ideograph is, an individual is unlikely to realize that the
ideograph is doing work upon them and that they are continuing this work via their use of it. Because ideographs are usually single words whose meanings are seemingly ubiquitous, it is easy to forget the sheer amount of history and norms we are transferring to the ears of another person. The following section takes two seemingly ubiquitous terms, freedom and Zionism, and shows how their assumed ideological meanings allow the United States to rationalize Israel’s actions toward Palestinians and how the history embedded within freedom and Zionism continues to justify activity in the Middle East via its preservation in the <west>/<Islam> and <democracy>/<terrorism> ideographic binaries.

The nuanced conception of freedom—the antidote for the malady of inhuman Arab terrorists as well as the justification for targeting individuals—provides a link between the United States and the State of Israel. While the United States didn’t construct this definition of freedom until the attacks of September 11th, the relationship between Israel and Palestine has always been characterized by the de-humanization of Palestinians and their classification as terrorists. Golda Meir’s denunciation of Palestinian statehood was a precursor to the connection between absence of civilized state and absence of humanity. Meir states, “It was not as if there was a Palestinian people in Palestine and we came and threw them out and took their country away from them. They did not exist” (JewishVirtualLibrary.Org). The idea of a state, such as the State of Israel, derives from the western conception of lands with borders, democratic proceedings and a presence on a map. For Palestine, which certainly began as a state but was eventually bifurcated by the creation of Israel, their lack of statehood negates their humanity for states with established borders. This helps to contextualize Meir’s erasure of the Palestinian people
and their homeland of Palestine, but not how their lack of statehood justifies their treatment as immoral barbarians who can never function in a state based civilized society.

Understanding the western construction of Palestine and Palestinians begins with understanding that the ideograph, in this case the United States and Israel’s shared understanding of freedom, facilitates action in the name of freedom. Israel began their relationship with Palestine by using the <west>/<Islam> binary to erase the fact that Palestinians had a homeland known as Palestine prior to the creation of Israel. With their characterization of Palestinians as now homeless, stateless, inhuman, uncivilized, Islamic Arabs, came Israel’s rationale in displacing Palestinians and claiming their homes as Jewish land. This rationale for displacement stems from the <west>/<Islam> binary in which the western construction of Islam supports inhumane treatment of its adherents. Under this binary, people with recognized statehood can now proceed with the mass displacement of Palestinians and the seizure of land and homes of a technically non-existent people.

While Israel is geographically part of the Middle East, ideologically they are a representation of the west. What links the United States to Israel is their shared opposition to Islamic Arabs that manifests through their actions and justifications for those actions via the <west>/<Islam> and <democracy>/<terrorism> ideographic binaries. After September 11th, the United States adopted a similar worldview as that of Israel on how to interact with the Arab world. The shift to the <democracy>/<terrorism> binary that justified attacking states based on the actions of individuals allowed Americans to understand Israel’s rationale for Palestine as well as garnered their support. The fact that there were individual terrorists like Hamas in Palestine was reason enough
to lay waste to Gaza and begin percolating the Palestinian West Bank. The United States’ own attacks on Middle Eastern individuals helped Americans to further understand Israel’s action toward Palestine, as well as approve of the measures Israel was taking against Palestinians that the United States could not. The commonality that the <democracy>/<terrorism> binary established between Israel and the United States is still a component of their friendship. As a democratic nation and strong U.S. ally, Israel has been given unequivocal support for the full use of its U.S. financed military. This is particularly true with Israel’s right to defend itself from Hamas sanctioned rocket fire as well as its freedom to live and do as it sees fit.

The rocket fire from Hamas in Gaza into Jerusalem, i.e. the work of terrorists, typically justifies Israel’s occupation of Palestinian territories. That is not to say that Israel shouldn’t defend its citizens. However, the rationale behind the right-to-defend-argument is rarely discussed in mass media. The statement “right-to-defend” implies that Palestine is of equal military capability and constitutes a viable threat to Israel, two statuses Palestine has never achieved. Reporter Chris Hedges describes Palestinians as “a defenseless population, a population that has no air force, no navy, no command-and-control, no mechanized units, no heavy artillery, and certainly no air force” (therealnews.com). The state of Palestinian power and capability has been in this general state for some time. And in the middle of war crimes on both sides, are civilians who account for 85% of the death toll as of October 2014 (therealnews.com). Obviously, Israeli and Palestinian power is not equal and the right-to-defend-argument is not as applicable as the media wants its viewers believe. These levels of civilian deaths in the age of civilized warfare would usually prompt intense scorn. But through the media’s use
of the ideograph <terrorism> to frame the Middle East, these types of statistics become
naturalized and expected from the Middle East.

The inhumanity of the situation does not supersede the abstract ideological goals
promoted by <west>/<Islam>. It is common for the preservation of the American agenda
to justify any and all options. And as many individuals and organizations both at the
national and international level have argued, many examples of Israeli policy and action
would not be possible or even legally tolerated without the power and ideological
backing of the U.S. So great is the American influence, international laws set forth by the
U.N. have been ignored or broken, with the powers that do so receiving a verbal hand
slap and nothing more. Amongst all of the countries in the Middle East, Israel remains the
friendliest door through which the U.S. can enter and operate in the region. It is a
friendship that stems not only from its geographical proximity to terrorism, but from the
shared history of Zionism and the ties between the Jewish and Protestant Christian
religions of the U.S. The next section will provide further discussion on the history
between the United States and Israel in order to elaborate the influence of Zionism in the
diachronic element of these emerging ideographic binaries.

**Christianity, Islam, and Zionism in the United States**

The second diachronic ideology in the discourse of Israel-Palestine is the
traditionally pro-Zionist attitude of the United States. Zionism began gaining popularity
in the United States after World War I due to the increasing Jewish American population
and the work of Louis D. Brandeis (JewishVirtualLibrary.Org). Before Brandeis began
his Zionist work, many American Jews were opposed to the creation of the Jewish state in
Palestine. Prior to Brandies, American Jews considered the United States as their new
Zion and considered the construction of a new Zion to be a “secular effort” (JewishVirtualLibrary.Org) that went against God’s will. The turning point in American and Jewish relations came in 1915 when Brandeis agreed to chair a Zionist meeting in Boston after a great deal of research on and dialogue with Jewish Zionists. Brandeis’ work in promoting the compatibility of Americanism and Zionism further legitimized Zionism in the mind of the American Jews. By 1917, the American Zionist movement boasted 200,000 members and Brandeis was chairing the American Provisional Executive Committee for General Zionist Affairs (JewishVirtualLibrary.Org). Through Brandeis efforts, America became the financial hub for the world Zionist movement and the creation of a new Zion.

The successful Zionist effort in establishing Israel came in 1947 when the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution that called for the establishment of Israel upon the termination of the British mandate over Palestine. The greatest impetus for the creation of the state of Israel was the Holocaust and the unrelenting religious persecution of the Jewish people. However, the justification for the existence and location of the State of Israel stems from the Bible. The Zionist movement of the 1940’s held the belief that the lands of current day Israel and Palestine were bequeathed in scripture to the Jewish people and this belief is reflected in the documents surrounding the establishment of Israel. Written in the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel are references to Israel as the natural homeland of the Jewish people. The declaration states, “In the year of 5657 (1897), at the summons of the spiritual father of the Jewish State, Theodore Herzl, the first Zionist Congress convened and proclaimed the right of the Jewish people to national rebirth in its own country” (JewishVirtualLibrary.Org). The declaration
continues with, “This recognition by the United Nations of the right of the Jewish people to establish their State is irrevocable. That right is the natural right of the Jewish people to be masters of their own fate” (JewishVirtualLibrary.Org). Finally, “We, members of the people’s council, representatives of the Jewish community of Eretz-Israel and of the Zionist movement are here…by virtue of our natural and historical right” (JewishVirtualLibrary.Org). Undoubtedly, this history shows how Zionism helps to construct Israel as a non-Arab homeland.

To understand the link between the western United States, the State of Israel in the territory of Palestine, and the treatment of Palestinians in Israel, we must recall that the use of ideographic terms makes certain actions possible. Buried inside Israel’s western democracy are other concepts that work to justify their characterization of Palestine and Palestinians. The Jews of Israel and the Arabs of Palestine share many commonalities in their respective histories. Both are a people who have suffered through racial prejudice, relocation, forced exoduses, the want of a homeland, the urge to return to their natural birthplace, and attempts of systematic genocide from other powers. Unfortunately, Israel’s uptake and understanding of <west> and <Democracy> prevents it from understanding and connecting to Arab Palestinians in this way. Because <west> and <Democracy> construct the Arab as outside of civilization and disrupters of international peace and freedom, Israeli’s have formed their own modern state by denying its land and opportunity to those who lived there before. The understanding of <Democracy> i.e. freedom, allows Israelis to displace and discriminate against the Palestinian race in the same way the Jewish race has been displaced and discriminated against. Said acknowledges Israel’s conception of the Arab as unwanted and unsuitable for Israel when
he writes “If the Arab occupies space enough for attention, it is as a negative value. He is seen as the disrupter of Israel's and the West's negative value. He is seen as the disruptor of Israel's and the West's existence, or in another view of the same thing, as a surmountable obstacle to Israel's creation in 1948” (286). The idea of the Arab as an obstacle to establishing free civilizations continues to this day, where Palestinians are removed from their own land and forced into the shrinking Palestinian territories.

Refuting Zionism in the United States, a country that has historically had the agenda of the Christian bible in mind, is an incredibly unpopular course of action. The American emphasis on the tie between Christianity and Zionism is reflected in both <west> and <Islam>. Remember that ideographs find meaning through their contrast with another ideograph. The religious foundations in the <west> are strengthened by the use of <Islam>. Already Islam was excluded from the western world through the previous binary. Its juxtaposition with <west> implied that Islam is not part of the Western world nor is it a concern for western citizens. With <Islam> transforming into <terrorism>, the religion is now thought to be a recruiting ground for terrorists, and the choice between Israel and the Middle East becomes easy. Israel’s friendship with the West combined with the violence between Israel and Palestine has served to strengthen the ideological understanding of these binary ideographs. Consequently, the influence of Zionism in the history of American/Israeli/Palestinian relations is inextricable and has become both the judge in subsequent diplomacy in Palestine and the dominant lens through which to view Arab populations.

While the majority of this chapter’s analysis has focused on conversation and spoken discourse, ideographs are used in a variety of other communicative discourses.
One such method is visual discourse. Because ideographs are represented ideologies, they can be utilized not only in speech, but in visuals such as maps, advertisements, and monuments, all the while retaining their ability to produce tangible consequences. Because a vast percentage of human information is absorbed visually, an image assures that whether or not someone means to, they will visually ingest pieces of the ideological arguments around them. It matters not if they are in accord. The visual ideograph will still function as feedback in the mind as one continues to live and breathe in the ideologies of the ideographs around them.

**Visual Ideographs**

Below is a created image that was used by Eileen Fleming in Oregon’s Salem News as part of a series on Palestinian history and tragedy. Shown in four frames, the image depicts the changing borders of Israel-Palestine, starting at the creation of the State of Israel in 1947 and ending in 2005. The image is constructed to show how Palestinians have lost their land to Israeli expansion in an attempt to fill an absence and it challenges the assumptions of the Israeli ideograph of <Democracy> that is used to justify the relocation of Palestinians in order to seize their land. While the visual appears to neutrally depict border change over time, it actually depicts the horror experienced by the Palestinian people. Fleming’s particular use of this image as one of exposure is a popular technique online and it often accompanies texts that discuss the horror of Palestinian life that is typically obscured by or is never demonstrated in a political map.
I have already established that ideographs produce material changes in the world. For Palestine, many of those changes come in the form of conflict. One such conflict is over space, which is justified by Israel’s and the United States’ ideological understanding of <Democracy> and how it characterizes the Arab Palestinians. The first frame of the map shows the British territory of Palestine prior to the creation of Israel. Despite Palestine being owned by the British, it was still a place where Palestinians lived and where they had been living throughout history. Notice the map designates the territory as a definite area named Palestine along with the legend in the upper left corner of the first frame, which labels the green Palestine areas as Palestinian land. The term Palestinian
designates that not only is this the land of Palestine but also the land of Palestinians, the people living there as British subjects. The first frame also features the small Jewish settlements in the British territory of Palestine. Jewish settlements in Palestine are a trend that continues into the modern day. The Jewish people have continued to settle more and more Palestinian land even in the face of international laws that forbid them to do so. However, the conception of freedom does not allow for the Jewish people to see their actions as illegal. Zionism has legitimized the belief that Israel-Palestine is land given by God to the Jewish people. Palestinian land is their natural and historic birthplace and their supposed ownership of this land has excluded Palestinians from their own ancestral homeland.

The second and third frames represent the United Nations’ conceptualization of the State of Israel within Palestine and the actual borders of Israel upon its creation respectively. In the second frame, Israel and Palestine now share approximately half of the land, both Israeli and Palestinians are acknowledged as a sovereign people and the Palestinian people still have a connected state that maintains their communication and identity as Palestinians. There is no living in either the West Bank or Gaza. There is just Palestine and Israel in what appears to be a viable two state solution. Unfortunately, the second frame is only a concept of how Israel and Palestine could possibly co-exist together, so the UN’s plan never becomes the reality. However, referring back to the dehumanization of Arab Palestinians through the use of ideographs designates the UN’s plan as an impossibility. The freedom and Zionist ideologies embedded in <Democracy> does not allow for the Jewish people to conceptualize Palestinians as capable of living within a civilized society like Israel.
The third frame represents the actual borders of Israel-Palestine upon Israel’s establishment and brings attention to a now bifurcated and reduced Palestinian state into what is now Gaza and the West Bank. The conceptualization of Israel-Palestine borders in the second frame are vastly different than those in the third frame. Notice the nearly twenty year span of time that this image illustrates. From 1949 to 1967 the UN’s conception of the Israel-Palestine border changed from what appeared to be a working two state solution to the creation of Palestinian territories Gaza and the West Bank rather than the state of Palestine. These are currently the borders that are drawn on a political map. However, this particular frame in conjunction with its parent article conveys something that a political map cannot: the consistent reduction of Palestinian land through Israel’s continued expansion. This particular frame also illustrates why the creation of the State of Palestine is harder to conceptualize and accept for other state recognized powers. The citizens of the West Bank and Gaza are not connected as a state. They have their identity as Palestinians amongst themselves, yet no concrete and connected state in which to showcase this coherent identity on the international stage. Palestinian fragmentation feeds into the idea of a stateless, non-existent people and further supports the western belief in the ideologies of the <west>/<Islam> and <democracy>/terrorism> binaries. With the State of Palestine absent in both conversation and political maps as well as their constantly adjusted and reduced borders, it is impossible for Palestinians to escape the west’s dehumanizing ideological beliefs and gain entry into statehood and civilization.

The final frame continues the conversation of Israeli expansion by showing the continued settling of the West Bank from 1967 to 2005. The fourth frame addresses
Israeli expansion more directly than the previous frames. For example, the legend in the upper left hand corner of the fourth frame sees a shift from Israeli land to Israeli and occupied land. This changed label gives the fourth frame a sense of motion and immediacy to the dissolution of the Palestinian West Bank while the prior frames label of Israeli land and Palestinian land communicated a sense of legal boundaries and separate but cooperative peoples. Another example is the porous state of the West Bank due to Israeli settlements in the region. Not only are Gaza and the West Bank dissected from one another, now the West Bank has also been cleaved into minute swathes of land, further isolating Palestinians from one another. These Jewish settlements force repeated exoduses of the Palestinian people and corrals them into miniscule, densely populated pieces of land. Fleming’s article uses this map to demonstrate the horrific consequences for Palestinian people from Jewish settlements. Of course, with the freedom and Zionist ideologies of back up, Israel can continue to claim the land as rightly belonging to the Jewish people and continue their occupation of Palestine.

These settlements, which displace Palestinians and force them to retreat to increasingly dense strips of Palestinian land, have been repeatedly condemned by the United Nations, Amnesty International, countless refugee organizations and various figures in political, celebrity, and academic spheres. Unfortunately, the amount of public outcry is not enough to halt the trend and implement international law. A created image like Figure 1 is an excellent representation of humanity/inhumanity in a technical document and justifies the outrage of Pro-Palestine advocates. This is not the case with political maps, which naturalize the locations of borders without an explanation or analysis of why borders are the way they are. By choosing to focus on one viewpoint, the
image excludes countless others, and reality is obscured by the presence of “Truth.” Including these types of humanistic facts and statistics in political maps would serve as a great first step in removing the objectivity from inhumane practice.

This assumed objectivity obscures an image’s unethical use in everyday circumstances. For those who don’t study visual rhetoric, the image is often considered an unbiased point of view, a view just happened upon by a deist eye. The reasons for the image, the strategy behind its presentation, and the eye on the other side of the image are all thought by audiences to be innocent of desire or opinion. The assumed objectivity of the image allows audiences to separate what they are seeing from what or who the image is representing, which results in the unethical erasure of human suffering. Technical writing scholars have been discussing the need for the ethical use of visuals for over a decade. In their article “Cruel Pies: The Inhumanity of Technical Illustrations,” Sam Dragga and Dan Voss explain that visuals “in certain rhetorical situations—especially in the reporting of human fatalities—conventional illustrations offer inhumanity as though it were objectivity” (265). The authors state, “Technical illustrations are never objective representations of reality, but socialized constructions of multiple subjective interpretations of available filtered evidence” (266). Elaborating on the false neutrality of visuals, Dragga and Voss claim that the average viewer is far more likely to assume that a visual is unbiased or is without agenda than they would information presented through a different medium. This is because the average individual has far less experience with reading and understanding a visual mode of presentation, meaning they haven’t as much knowledge going into a visual situation (Dragga and Voss 265). This inexperience allots a visual ideograph more persuasive power and efficacy, as viewers are far more likely to
see the visual as neutral rather than another option in rhetorical choice.

While ideographs like <terrorism>, <west>, <democracy>, and <Islam> contribute to the support of Palestine’s reduction, they also contribute to the ethical problem of offering “inhumanity as though it were objectivity” (Dragga and Voss 265) when reporting human fatalities. The nonchalance around Palestinian death stems from the <terrorism> ideograph. Terrorism has taken on a different meaning since September 11th. The word is overwhelmingly associated with the Middle East in political and media conversations. Of course terrorism and terrorists come in all forms. But <terrorism> has linked the act of terrorizing to the Middle Eastern population, implying that the act is exclusive to that part of the world. Now that the publicly understood image of terrorism has assumed a Middle Eastern visage, the death of individuals who are thought of as potential terrorists erodes the concern for human rights violations. Because of Middle Eastern action against the United States on September 11th, terrorists are thought of as violently anti-American, sub-human nuisances that disrupt the Western plan.

According to Edward Said, the Occidental has always viewed the Oriental as sub-human, whether it be in the study of the Oriental as an object of study (11), as a war zone, as a barbaric warring group, as a sexualized fantasy, as an oil pit or as something that is taking up space. He writes, “More than anything else, the political and cultural circumstances in which Western Orientalism has flourished drew attention to the debased position of the Orient or Oriental as an object of study” (96). Said writes that these and other associations with Palestinians and the rest of the Middle East arise from the simple fact that any other type of representation or presentation that the Occident could possibly identify with have been suppressed or dismissed until forgotten from the social
conversation. Both the omission of any differing, more humanizing representation of the Middle East along with the representations that are allowed to circulate about the region are rhetorical acts. They enable the greater availability of one public’s discourse over another, guaranteeing far greater circulation and attention. Because a level of rhetorical resistance has yet to be seen, the adversarial relationship between the West and the East has continued and the ideographs have remained active in language and conversation. It is in consequence to these long lasting rhetorical representations of the Arab people as innately and historically barbaric toward the European interest, that the violent factions of Islam have come to be representative of the entire populace.

McGee agrees with the ideograph’s inability to represent a Truth. He writes, “We can characterize an ideograph, say what it has meant and does mean as a usage” (9). It is irrelevant to look for the truth in ideographs as we can never assume that any human is capable of deriving and understanding a pure meaning “unpolluted by historical, ideographic usages” (9). That does not mean that ideographs should be discarded from the meaning making process. McGee locates the significance of the ideograph in their “concrete history as usages” (10), rather than in an assumption that someone will use them to present the truth we have all been missing. In terms of usages, the necessity with these ideological representations is that everyone has access to the history they have influenced along with the opportunity to incorporate them into their own freely expressed ideas. Lest, the ideology of the oppressively powerful masquerade as common sense.

Conclusion

The pages of history and analysis required to pull this chapter together was altogether revealing. The couplet of a millennium of history and the astonishing amount
of skewing work completed on the subject have turned the topic of Israel-Palestine into a winner’s game for anyone wishing to see past the propaganda. To understand the place and pace of events requires a more extensive and comprehensive knowledge of the area, cultures, histories, foreign policies, and religious influence than the media and overly regulated academia can give. That, coupled with the lack of resources outside of Middle Eastern war and imperialism makes it highly improbable, nay practically impossible, to turn to a source other than the mainstream narrative. While a multitude of stories, worldviews and histories should await the curious public, the tragedy is that they are, for the most part, not there. The purpose of the diachronic analysis is to show that this is not a recent, nor is it an unconscious or innocent event. Because these sources are so encouraged and widespread (the media, academia, and politics) their influence on the public is easily discernible and their power quickly demonstrated.

For the diachronic part of the ideograph, I have included what I believe to be the dominant influences on how these ideographs and their accompanying narratives currently work. The imperialist filled interaction between the East and West, the insult to American freedom and power that has dogged the entirety of the Arab community since September 11th, as well as the comradery shared by the United States and Israel help support an overwhelming majority of decisions and justifications reported to citizens. Now that I have discussed the diachronic dimension of the ideograph, the next chapter will analyze the synchronic dimension via the representations of American mass media. The media chapter focuses on the synchronic or social dimension of the ideograph. As they are inseparable from one another in forming the dimensions of the ideograph, the historical sets up the conditions as to why the social still holds onto historical
constructions and uses them in current/modern society. The synchronic analysis will build from the diachronic by allowing us to locate these same assumptions and rhetorical constructions in the current day ideographs, working to explain the ideologies that are embedded in the specific usage of these terms.
CHAPTER III

ABSENCE AS IDEOGRAPH: THE AGENCY OF THE UNSPOKEN

Introduction

In appearances on three major networks, Palestinian journalist Rula Jabreal dropped a statistical bomb about the absence of Palestinian representation on mass media. Informing hosts and viewers alike that the ratio of Israeli to Palestinian voices was greater than 10:1 (DemocracyNow.com), Jabreal attributed American’s strong support of harsh pro-Zionist policy and lack of knowledge of Palestinian civilian life to this rhetorical imbalance. In broaching the topic of ever worsening news bias on a prime time news program, Jabreal highlighted mainstream journalism’s failure to provide a comprehensive analysis of world events, an absence that leaves viewers to fall back on their long standing beliefs and conflations on Islam, Palestinians, and the entirety of the Middle East region. Her use of the phrase “Palestinian voices” is particularly apt; it reiterates the basic points of this project about the state of Palestinian self-representation in mass media, as well as draws attention to a situation that can be characterized as extermination without representation for Palestinian civilians. With the American ideographs of <terrorism> and <democracy> working to support Israel’s well-being and prosperity over Palestine’s, Jabreal’s commentary on the lack of voices requires an analysis that goes beyond tracing racial and religious tensions and political maneuverings.
This chapter will examine how the use of ideographs create an absence of alternative narratives and histories of Palestine. The mass media communicates these ideographs through several kinds of texts, including: reports, visuals, choice of words, heated exchanges, as well as through the blatant hostility shown to guests that are not in league with the mass media’s worldview. The synchronic analysis draws attention to the media’s use of the ideographs <terrorism> and <democracy> in order to illustrate two ideas: First, their textual use in the mass media results in an informational lack or absence around the topic they ideologically oppose. Understanding this absence as a lack of representation for Middle Eastern voices and their narratives is the first step in understanding how the media creates a homogenous audience. Second, the creation of this informational void and a particular audience is intrinsic to these ideographs’ agency and continued domination. That is to say that the consequences of the mass media’s specific usage of these ideographs are the continued ignorance and demonization of the Arab world. Undoubtedly the method, debating the power of something defined as absent, can seem counterintuitive. Fortunately in a study such as rhetoric, which deems our rhetorical choices and terministic screens as important, this absence couldn’t be more salient and powerful. While theorizing absence and ideographs is uncommon in scholarship, I suggest that the absence of information that results from the communication of ideographs is as much a part of their function as the information they convey. More of the focus in ideographic analyses rests on what has been said, circulated, and supported rather than the potential buried in what has been silenced. Even though absence as ideograph isn’t an academically established concept, there is still a great deal to obtain from analyzing these absences of information in this manner. Arguably, the most
crucial rewards are the questions it forces us to raise in regards to Palestine: What does it look like to actively silence a burgeoning narrative? How do these ideographs stifle opposing opinions? And finally, what truths would be established and what actions would be inspired had more neutral and pro-Palestine narratives been allowed to circulate?

The concept of absence as ideograph spawns from the work of Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca and their conception of presence and audience. Perelman defines presence as “the rhetor’s linguistic projection of important elements into the audience’s sphere of consciousness” (Long 4) along with the “argumentative schemes which the rhetor uses to persuade an audience” (Long 5). Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca define the audience that is being persuaded as the particular audience. This relationship between the rhetor and the particular audience is rhetorical, meaning that establishing presence has to be accomplished by persuasion via the “amplification of an audience’s opinions, convictions, and commitments” (4). According to the authors, a “rhetor who attempts to gain the adherence of an audience’s mind and who, simultaneously, addresses a multiplicity of audiences, must first reduce the minds into a singular mind.” (Long 4). This singular opinion group is known as the universal audience.

While the universal audience is a powerful tool in persuading the particular audience, it is actually “a creation of the rhetor who refers to it so that a particular audience will adhere” to the convictions of the rhetor and the throngs of people that supposedly support them. Perelman and Olbrecht-Tyteca are correct in classifying the universal audience—an unknown mass of individual minds whose level of conviction nearly elevates a belief to the status of “self-evident truth” (3)—as an incredibly persuasive element for the particular audience. This is especially true for huge platforms
like American mass media, whose viewership is in the millions. When rhetors work to transform their particular audiences into a universal audience, they become both “a member of the audience” (3) and secure the adherence of others as they become part of the imaginary universal audience. Instead of looking at what is said to reduce diverse thoughts and audiences, this analysis concerns itself with what must be silenced in order for the universal audience to flourish. By analyzing the talking points emphasized by mass media mouthpieces, the narratives that are discouraged for particular audiences can be better seen and understood.

**Absence as a Function of the Ideograph**

Ideographic influence in the American mass media goes beyond language. The ideograph can conduct its work in any component of news broadcasts such as in a logo, a headline, or the types of guests a news program features. In light of the ideograph’s rhetorical flexibility, this chapter’s analysis will begin with the verbal and then extend its reach to the non-verbal dimensions of American mass media. Non-verbal aspects include the speaker(s), their tones, the placement of hosts and guests on the screen, and accompanying visuals. The analysis incorporates these artifacts not only to show the blatant, but also to verbalize what has been left unspoken in the strategy of rhetorical choice. The fact that rhetorically effective speaking involves choice of and strategy with texts is incontrovertible. It is because these rhetorical choices must be made that far more is left unspoken in conversation. It is impossible to say everything at once, inevitably excluding texts and meaning from every conversation. The American mass media is no different.

Understanding absence in the various components of American mass media starts
with understanding that these information deserts are not the result of network time constraints, ongoing investigations, or accidental oversights. They are purposeful and agentive. It is a common mistake on the part of the non-elite public to consider their media as a moral counterweight or watch dog agency to the elites of society. Even in the information age, audiences’ technologically advanced and custom designed news feeds are more filtered and narrowed than anything prior. Intellectual giants such as Noam Chomsky have been exploring the media’s influence and what it presents/omits from public conversation since the 1970s. In a speech on his and Edward S. Herman’s 1988 book *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, Chomsky details how public consent is accomplished through specific media techniques, such as “the selection of topics, distribution of concern, by the way they frame issues, by filtering of information, by emphasis and tone . . . but crucially by the bounding of debate, to make sure that it doesn’t go outside of certain limits (The Film Archives 0:50-1:06).

These limits that Chomsky is referring to are the opinions of those “on the left” and “on the right,” (Chomsky 15) a limited spectrum ruled by private power that represents the ceiling for what Americans know to be true and/or possible. Limitations such as these could not exist if the mass/mainstream publics were too aware or if they had improved knowledge of sources that are unaffiliated with mass media. Communication studies has continued to advance ideas concerning the media’s work in controlling public thought while incorporating rhetorical studies (including visual rhetoric) to build on Chomsky’s linguistic base. This intellectual expansion now allows us to find value in what media talking heads are saying, the ideologies their terministic screens reveal, the strategic placement of specific discourse as well as the rhetorical nature of visuals, both
Absence of the Verbal

The first network that uses nuanced ideographs is CNN. CNN is one of many networks that utilize the popular culture of martyrdom narrative. The culture of martyrdom narrative asserts that Palestinians are willing to die for Hamas’ approval so they can earn money and prestige (The Moral Divide 4:44-4:47). This narrative has a dual purpose: the first is to obviously maintain the prominence of this characterization of Palestinian citizens and the second is to rob Palestinians of any human resemblance in favor of imagining Palestinian civilians as eager martyrs. On July 12th, 2014 CNN Jake Tapper brings up this phrase to former PLO legal advisor Diana Buttu when he expresses that she “can’t believe [Palestinians] don’t want to die” (The Moral Divide 4:23-4:27). Buttu spends the remaining minutes of the interview rebutting Tapper’s widely held assumption and restores humanity to Palestinian civilians explaining that they, like all other human populations, want to live and live their lives peacefully. Tapper is noticeably floored by Buttu’s rationale: Just look at this culture of martyrdom “we hear about all the time” (4:28-4:31). This statement aligns his view with the unchallenged ideological assumptions reflected in our media. Tapper says nothing ground breaking. Rather than taking the rare opportunity to speak with a pro-Palestine representative, legal expert, and Palestinian woman, Tapper prevents Buttu from explaining her expert of Palestinian life.

Buttu’s inability to speak about Palestinian life is the type of absence that typifies American knowledge on Palestinians. By preventing Buttu from presenting Palestinians as life loving humans, Tapper conflates citizens that are “used” as human shields with Hamas itself. Even if the claims of Hamas using children as human shields are correct, it
does not mean that their human shields understand and acquiesce to this. Nor does it mean that Palestinian civilian culture demands the martyring of family members. Centering the discussion on civilians apart from their government is the absence that allows commentary like Tapper’s to run unopposed and uncomplicated. For Tapper, the children, Palestine’s next generation, seem to symbolize the next wave of Hamas members as well as serve as a living bridge between Hamas and the older civilians of Gaza. If the indoctrination of fundamental ideas is what Tapper fears for the children of Palestine, what better solution than to allow the open dialogue of the world against the actions of Hamas to reach their ears? Why not permit the world and Palestine to reunite and rob Hamas of its human ammo? It is because Tapper’s persistence in discussing Hamas rather than the lives of citizens with Buttu maintains the media status quo.

Tapper’s focus makes it clear that what the media believes its particular audience needs to hear is the discussion around Hamas, rather than discussing what life must be like as a citizen in present day Gaza.

There has been a long running effort in the mass media to encourage the conflation of Palestinians with Hamas, Middle Eastern terrorist groups, and the mystique that has historically surrounded the Orient for members of the Occident. One of the most successful methods in accomplishing this conflation is accusing the Palestinian people and their supporters of being in league with Anti-Semitic attitudes. Intellectuals such as Chomsky, Earl Raab, Brian Klug, and Allan C. Brownfeld have clarified the distinction between Anti-Zionism and Anti-Semitism. The former refers to a critique on the policies of the state of Israel and the latter refers to the prejudice and hatred of Jews as a national ethnic group. In an interview with Chris Phillips, organizer of the Million American
March Against Fear, which serves as a memorial for Americans and Muslims that have died in the wars following September 11\textsuperscript{th}, Fox News’ Sean Hannity creates an absence by conflating Anti-Semitism with anti-Zionism. Phillips explains that the march is open to any non-violent individual, including Muslims, who wants to memorialize the Americans and Muslims who have died since September 11th. When Hannity hears that Muslims are invited to the march he conflates the American Muslim with Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Muslim Brotherhood, and accuses the rally of hosting anti-Semites (SaveOurLiberty 4:36). He paints Muslim civilians as inherently anti-Semitic due to their belief in Islam, making the march appear to be anti-Semitic because it is Anti-Zionist.

Hannity’s ideological line is clearly drawn with this kind of statement. His changing the march’s title to the Million Muslim March (a phrase he uses for the remainder of the interview) showcases the very fear the march aims to dispel around September 11\textsuperscript{th} and the American Middle Eastern population. His outrage over the fact that there could be a million Muslims at an “American” march, or a million Muslims in the United States at all, further demonstrates his use of <democracy> to denote only non-Muslims as Americans. Phillips’ explicit statement that those in attendance are not followers of radical Islam nor are they anti-Semites attending an anti-hate rally does nothing to deter Hannity’s association of Muslims with terrorism.

Despite Hannity’s follow up assertion that the United States takes great pains to distinguish between practitioners of Islam and radical Islam, he and his co-host continue to accuse Phillips of hosting a platform for “flaming anti-Semites” (4:04) who blame Israel (4:12). This statement directly establishes the link between those who have lost
family to Zionist policies and those who want to suppress the Jewish people based on their ethnicity and their religion (anti-Semites). Hannity’s guest speaker—although one could easily mistake him for a co-host based on his allowed commentary time—is just as pejorative, implying secret agendas, and ignorance of “real” American’s feelings about Arabs and September 11th. Combated from both sides of the screen, Phillips then has to directly state that anti-Zionism is not anti-Semitism (5:20), which was met by Hannity’s very articulate “Mmm Hmm” (5:26). Since Fox News is the most popular news outlet in the U.S., its extreme and unsubstantiated claim that radical and anti-Semitic Muslims benefit from this march has now been communicated as objective, hard hitting journalism to an incredible amount of viewers. Fox News’ popularity and self-made label of fair and balanced news makes it easier than ever for its massive audience to believe these types of accusations.

The most striking aspect of this video is that it shows how serious the work involved in maintaining hegemony can become. <Terrorism> and <democracy> work to create a land, people, and time that appear to be at stake. And Hannity and company are not scared of using their discourse as verbal projectiles raining down on their guest, in much the same way the adamant barrage between Palestine and Israel continues even now. Phillips is sandwiched between two Caucasian males, armed with accusations and patriotic speaking points meant to chastise those working to remind Americans that their Muslim brethren also lost family, friends, and direction in the aftermath of September 11th. Set in the middle of a thrice split screen, Phillips is caged, not unlike the citizens of Gaza, while his rationale is rebuked. Phillips is on the defensive for the majority of the interview and is unable to elaborate on other issues around the march. Again, the
alternative Palestinian narrative is silenced. The active suffocation of an already gasping narrative for the overwhelmingly pro-Zionist viewers of Fox News couldn’t be on greater display.

*Figure 2. Screenshot of Chris Phillips’ FOX NEWS interview*

Echoing Jabreal’s statistics on Israeli vs. Palestinian voices, the dual hosts get to contribute far more words to their rationale than their lone guests. They interrupt; they speak pejoratively of the anti-hate march, and concentrate not on what they say but how loud they say it. By segment’s end, Muslim Americans are again cast in the image of overseas terrorists, the Middle Eastern brethren they march to honor are not mentioned again, and the veracity of the entire anti-hate march has been called into question. Hannity’s questioning the propriety of American Muslim’s marching in remembrance
shows that Muslims, regardless of their citizenship and patriotism, are excluded from this ideology’s definition of democracy and the acceptable American citizen. Therefore, they are not to be supported or represented in the narrative that is deserved by the real Americans and they are not to mourn their loss on a day meant for home grown patriots.

Absence as ideograph is not exclusive to explicit verbal argument. Absence does not only apply to the information that is suppressed or put under taboo. It also applies to the information that should, but never, comes to light. While reporting on the shelling between Israel and Palestine, Diane Sawyer of ABC news displayed a picture from what the anchor claimed to be Israel post-bombing. Featured in the photo was a Palestinian family salvaging through the wreckage of an Israeli bombing, the destruction around them comprehensive and overwhelming. All the typical machinations were present: the emphasis on the tragic irony of murder in the Holy Land, a child’s image to remind viewers how easily that could be their own children, and the fallen buildings that recall the metonymic visual the United States has attached to September 11th; the fall of the World Trade Center. The next night saw Sawyer again with the same image but a vastly different story. Sawyer began her report by apologizing for a network error. After receiving word from by pro-Palestinian journalist Rania Klahek (NewYorkDailyNews.Com) that their featured image was from Palestine rather than Israel, ABC had no choice but to let viewers know of their photographic mistake. After assuring viewers of the networks dedication in reporting factual, up to date news, Sawyer moves on without the sympathetic monologue the image received the prior evening. Because the story is led by an image rather than an expert or guest speaker, Sawyer is not forced into rhetorically stifling points of views that contradict the status quo. Rather, she
glides over the image, denying Palestine the empathy and understanding extended to Israel.

Figure 3. Photograph of Palestine post bomb strike

Absence of Visual Rhetoric

What would have been the travesty in ABC following up on that story? If the story and its accompanying image were so newsworthy when connected to Israel’s devastation, what changes this urgency now that the child is Palestinian and those buildings house her Palestinian kin? Whatever the official excuse is, ABC and its mouthpieces are not apologizing for the misinformation and misleading. Nor are they apologizing for interrupting their viewer’s evenings with such sadness or for surprising them with a frightening image of destructive misery. Instead they are apologizing to both
their viewers and owners for accidentally showing the reality of Palestine at all, illustrating that this particular image was supposed to be absent. ABC’s choice to remain silent on the true circumstances behind the photo is a noteworthy one, as the relationship between words and images is not slight. According to Barbie Zelizer,

Words and images can support each other by recounting in text what is shown in pictures; words can narrow what an image shows by directing viewers toward parts of the depiction deemed relevant to the story; words can broaden what a picture shows by generalizing it through a broader message; words can diminish or refute what the image shows by directing attention to aspects of the story that are not depicted. Which aspects of the about-to-die image are underscored in adjoining texts is critical. (59)

Even the typical disastrous debate would have been preferable to the complete silence on the matter. At least through debate, what is considered unequivocally to be the democratic liberation of the world from Hamas can be further complicated.

The agency involved in images works differently than that of verbal discourse. While popular talking points can slip by unnoticed or become lost in the soup of everyday conversation, an image can be poignant and unforgettable. The undeniable evidence before one’s eyes has the capacity to inspire pathos in a viewer and help define what and who the casualties actually are in the messy business of war. But how many of these images are not misidentified and remain squared away? Do we see the bullet ridden bodies of Palestinian children as much as the frustrated yet insulated Israeli civilian? The absence of these images means the absence of their impact. It means that the publics will never get the chance to remember these images and to be moved by their depictions. The
images of Palestinian suffering will never have that opportunity for rhetoricity, to be rhetorical. And the audience will never get to experience their own reaction toward and point of view of that image.

One of the most disturbing images of that terrible summer was the final seconds of three boys playing soccer on a Gazan beach. The boys were killed by an Israeli military shelling in the middle of their match. Their deaths prompted a massive local response that was mentioned by several journalists on Twitter. Despite the story’s rocky road to mass media coverage, those captured last moments amassed, arguably, greater attention than the details of the shelling itself. The situation ended as expected: the U.N. unresponsive and the U.S. state department stating that Hamas was ultimately responsible “for Israel killing of 4 boys in Gaza shelling by not agreeing to a ceasefire” (Ayman Mohyeldin Twitter). Although a great deal of footage and photos never gained traction in the American mass media, the images that did make their way to the publics of mass media still saw a greater outcry than was expected. The images were not of the boy’s lifeless bodies; Images that certainly exist and are recognizable in the international community. The image shown mostly in America media was of the four boys still alive and playing, only moments before the shelling was to occur. Zelizer titles these images as “about to die” images, using the knowledge of certain death to discuss the responses these images typically evoke in an audience. Undoubtedly the emotion is present. The inevitable death of unknowing children should evoke a very real and human response. Despite the certainty that the boys are dead, Zelizer describes these “about to die” photos as offering a “still-redeemable hope of responsive action” (317). This is due to the difference in viewing an image that depicts the dead verses one that depicts the about to
die. By seeing these children alive rather than dead, they come to represent the Palestinian children that may see a different future rather than those now gone. If the parameters of American journalism allowed for more photos of the dead, the response could have been incredibly different.

Still, the images leading up to their death are hard to look at and are, in some ways, more devastating than the footage of the shells impact the beach. Though the boys are never shown dying, the particular audience is left to look and imagine that final dwindling minute, their imaginations filling in the gruesome details and sealing the rhetorical power carried by the image.

*Figure 4*. Image of civilian Palestinian children
For American news viewers, this appears to be the preference. Zelizer notes that “though people tend to recall more about the news when visuals depict what is happening, viewers have definite assumptions about what should and should not be shown, and many regularly try to constrain images by notions of decency, taste, appropriateness, and tone” (20). It is curious to more than one that despite the proliferation of violence elsewhere in culture, viewers remain “so uncomfortable by the same images when they are shown as part of the news” (20) that images of the dead from war or torture are often labeled as graphic and promptly removed from sight. Public opinion and focus on Hamas via statements like those of the state department may have been what halted the momentum of these images and prevented them from disproving the devotion that is thought to thrum so strongly between Palestinians and the idea of martyrdom. What the impact of this photo could have been is impossible to say. What can be said is that the partial suppression of this photo and the state department’s blaming Palestinians for the deaths helped to divert attention and bypass the conversation around the image. It is another instance where the narrative is suppressed rather than used to understand life in Gaza.

The second image accompanying the shelling tragedy is of a grieving mother to one of the dead children. Taken and shared on social media by MSNBC reporter Ayman Mohyeldin, the image depicts a woman inconsolable, the simple caption stating she had just heard the news of her son’s death. While Ayman’s photograph and a video of the mother and family members’ hysterical mourning circulated through international news media, American mass media was far slower to react. Ayman, an eye witness to the carnage, was immediately removed from Gaza by MSNBC and other networks were
sluggish in putting together a story to deliver to the viewing public. The image received far greater attention on social media than on television with Ayman Mohyeldin prevented from reporting his account after his swift replacement from Gaza. We have already seen how newsworthy the shattered innocence of a child can be for American viewers from ABC’s mistaken photograph. Therefore, it makes sense that visuals from this tragedy would have to be handled smartly, lest these children become the next Mohammad al-Durrah. Particularly crucial is the reaction evident in both the mother’s photograph and the rarely mentioned video that captures the tearful aftermath of the blast. While children killed in Gaza are frequently called martyrs, the reactions of the family left behind give no indication that this was the desired outcome nor that they derive any pleasure from the death required to receive such a title. Visuals like that of the grieving mother could go very far in proving that the culture of martyrdom may not bring the happiness we are told it does. Unfortunately, when the story is accompanied by statements that Israel does not target civilians rather than possible solutions to saving the future of the Palestinian people, attention is re-directed, talking points repeated, and another almost narrative is created.
As I have stated in previous chapters, audiences perceive particular genres to be objective. The map and the news are two such genres. According to Barton and Barton, mapping practices imply objectivity by appearing to describe phenomena rather than representing their construction (Ideology and the Map, 3). Their discussion on denaturalizing the natural shows the map as a document that both includes via emphasis of specific information and excludes via repression of other information. Because a map deals in natural boundaries like the edges of land, the beginnings of the oceans, and the

Figure 5. Photograph of grieving Palestinian mother

Images and Rhetorical Difference

As I have stated in previous chapters, audiences perceive particular genres to be objective. The map and the news are two such genres. According to Barton and Barton, mapping practices imply objectivity by appearing to describe phenomena rather than representing their construction (Ideology and the Map, 3). Their discussion on denaturalizing the natural shows the map as a document that both includes via emphasis of specific information and excludes via repression of other information. Because a map deals in natural boundaries like the edges of land, the beginnings of the oceans, and the
ends of the Earth, audiences are inclined to trust a map as being truthful and without agenda. Yet, as chapter two points out, a political map such as that on a globe is incapable of articulating the constructed nature of national borders as well as mentioning the human blood that is part of these borders’ composition.

The footage of Phillips’ interview with Fox News operates under the same unbiased and objective label for non-expert audiences. First, the history of media and the philosophy of journalism have assured the public that reporting is just that, relaying information, data and statements in their exact context. Second, the construction of a news program like Sean Hannity’s gives the show a sense of being live and completely unrehearsed. The panel speaks in real time, on breaking and current issues, with guests being brought in mid conversation or mid analysis. The tension in Phillips’ interview also works to create a sense of an unrehearsed and objective atmosphere. The intensity from all three panelists plays out before our eyes and we appreciate the seemingly genuine emotion from individuals defending their beliefs. Despite the look of Hannity’s show, the segment is very much rehearsed. As the host, Hannity knows the angel of his interview and the direction he wants the conversation to follow. Since Fox News is a juggernaut in media in the United States, Hannity is also well aware of his audience demographic and the ideologies they look to Fox News to support. Both the map and the news segment are masquerades in *logos*, meaning they capitalize on the power that the word objectivity bestows on an idea or opinion. Using the audience’s assumed belief of objectivity and harnessing the power of *logos* is how these genres do their rhetorical work.

Conversely, the photos from Palestine possess a different rhetorical function. While the map and the news footage work through *logos*, the images of Palestinian life
gain meaning through our sense of pathos, or our emotional reactions. While the objective genres force the audience’s acceptance through naturalization, photographs, particularly about to die images, can inspire a want of change. It feels much easier and far more desirable to change the circumstances of a human life than to move a country’s borders. Because while the lay of the land appears to be a non-negotiable, the continued suffering of women and children does not. It is rare that any feeling human would explicitly wish for or justify such a thing before an audience. Using pathos and giving the audience permission to think something is wrong or needs to be stopped exposes the myth of photographic truth. By capturing a cruel and unnatural action like genocide through a supposedly objective medium complicates the audience’s understanding of the image. As Zelizer points out, the chosen moment of an about to die image can inspire a sense of hope and the thought of change within an audience. Suddenly, the image is no longer how something is and shall remain for the rest of time. It is now the recording of a singular moment whose outcomes have reasons and authors, both of which can change.

Conclusion

Clearly understanding the innards of mass media requires a great deal more than passively listening to what is explicitly said and more than only looking at what is shown. It can be far more telling to ask what remains behind the lips and what stays on the tip of the tongue. What are we seeing, not just explicitly seeing, when we are shown an image? What has been left out of the frame of reference when we behold a picture? These are the questions that need to accompany visuals. In regards to Palestine and Israel, the media operates on a policy of a deliberate absence; one that is just as purposeful and rhetorical as what is presented to viewers. The diachronic shows us that this absence has habitually
reoccurred via others constructing the Palestinian people and culture, as the synchronic affirms the livelihood of these past oppressions and justifications in our present thoughts. This absence is true too in the images published by mass media. Yet these images need to reach a broader range of mass media particular audiences to add a much needed complexity and humanity to the conversation. Zelizer writes that “viewers make images meaningful in ways that might not be readily apparent, photographs facilitate making sense of the world in a way that is not necessarily rational, evidentiary or reasoned” (Zelizer 13). Meaning that a visual image cannot show our eyes everything they need to see in a single frame, but it can evoke our strongest emotions and sense of veracity with one look. Because the image has the ability to show and obscure a moment of reality, strategy is key in evoking both or either of these abilities at the opportune moment.

When seen, images can start a “complicated battle of meaning over what was seen and its relationship to what was known” (Zelizer 202), beginning new ideas and discourse that will spread through the social conversation. Naturally this is all in theory and the process can be interrupted, leaving a blank space where dialogue should reside. Extending consideration of the ideograph from its ability to materialize to its ability to obscure allows the power of absence to become known and contributes to building a path to rhetoricity for the unmentionables. The next and final chapter will continue with the “what would be” tone of this chapter in an attempt to construct the very narrative that is missing in the current conversation. This chapter used what has been and what is being said to show just how much energy and strategy has gone into maintaining the popularity of this singular line of discourse. Because we now understand the types of information that are systematically excluded for control purposes, we can now examine this content
and better see the rhetorical potential residing in the truth this absent information communicates.
CHAPTER IV
LOOKING AT THE CREATION OF A COUNTERPUBLIC FOR GAZA

Introduction

The previous chapter illustrated the silence that stems from the work of the synchronic and how this silence contributes to the emergence of a dominate narrative. This final chapter will transition from the discussion of the popular narrative to those that are less mainstream. To do so, I will introduce the concept of a counterpublic: what they are, their work in the public sphere, their potential in changing leading ideologies of entire discourse communities, as well as their necessity in open and democratic public debate. The discussion on counterpublics sets up the second part of the chapter; my own example of a possible counternarrative that has been silenced in the public sphere. Focusing on a civilian shelling by the Israeli military, my counternarrative will implement the work of the international community, journalists, and public intellectuals to construct a narrative that, because it challenges a dominant narrative, would not receive the circulation and affirmation of other media backed sources. The previous chapters have shown that no matter the circumstances that unite them the eventually circulated record of Occident/Orient interaction will be one of violence, cultural clashes, and long held grudges. The animosity that has festered between the Occident and the Orient has influenced destructive truths for each group; truths that have been reinforced by the recent decades of Middle Eastern war and the post September 11th climate. As this chapter will demonstrate, it is incredibly difficult to overcome these naturalized
ideologies and the institutional money that backs them. Attempting to say that these two worlds are not locked in a pre-destined feud, that we are not the enemies others say we are, is difficult. These ideas go against the accepted narrative. The counternarrative I provide will be no different. By including an example of a counternarrative, I want to make visible the effort demanded from those willing to tell an unpopular and unsupported story, the pitiful amount of public and rhetorical space available for the conversation, the importance that lies in the existence of counterpublics along with the continued rhetorical and intellectual diversity of mass media audiences.

The previous chapters have analyzed various dominant narratives in the public discourse. Looking at the dominant historical and social narratives along with their influence on the current narrative helps to show the specific ideologies that have influenced western perception of the Middle East. Publics are responsible for the discourse that communicates ideologies and truths in the public sphere. The assumption of the Habermas’ public sphere is that publics will be allowed their rhetoricity and actively be given space to expand their argument, thereby contributing competing ideologies and complexity to public discussions and policy. Unfortunately, the nature of the public sphere has not been so fair. According to Michael Warner, “Dominant publics are by definition those that can take their discourse pragmatics and their lifeworlds for granted, misrecognizing the definite scope of their expansive address as universality or normalcy” (88). While dominant publics are those that enjoy widespread support and their ideology accepted as ‘the way things are,’ counterpublics are those that are positioned against a dominant public (Warner 86). Counterpublics are organized by the same self-activity and discourse as publics and often emerge as a “scene in which a
dominated group aspires to re-create itself as a public and, in doing so, finds itself in conflict not only with the dominant social group, but also with the norms that constitute the dominant culture as a public” (Warner 80). Often a reluctance “to be mistaken for the kind of person who would participate in this kind of talk or be present in this kind of scene” (86) forms in the public sphere when confronting societal norms or traditions. This results in silent and inaccessible ideas. These silenced ideas and their parent counterpublics perform two vital functions in the public sphere: They help us understand the diverse ideologies that can form around a topic and encourage people to question what they may think is unquestionable. They also work to show different ways that strangers can interact and affect one another, creating relational possibilities that defy oppressive systems already in place. In other words, the forced silence of counterpublics is the thievery of agency and the prohibition of information that a democratic populace is well in their rights to hear. Without them, thought, change, possibility, and questioning become myths in the ruling narrative.

This chapter seeks to reaffirm the necessity of counterpublics while making the need for Israel-Palestine counterpublics in the Western world apparent. While it is true that an effort to show the West a different side to the Israel-Palestine already exists, work of this nature is often occluded by the mass media’s incredibly outreach. Ergo, by incorporating a discussion on the existing counterpublics, I am contributing to their work in bringing attention to the other stories of Palestine and Palestinians.

Because the history between these two regions is tumultuous, it is impossible to cover everything. In order to limit the scope of this analysis, I will focus specifically on the shelling of civilian children discussed in the previous chapter. There is an
unmistakable timeliness in choosing this specific time period. Occurring only weeks prior
to the conception of this project, the events have yet to be analyzed as thoroughly as past
debacles. This makes the 2014 summer ripe for rhetorical analysis and the potential to
derialise how we talk about these two entities very strong. There are also the unique
elements that are present in this episode. The Israeli shelling of Palestine in the summer
of 2014 was very unlike recent battles in the Holy Land. An unbelievable amount of
western attention was on the conflict itself, rather than the friendship with Israel. Major
news networks like MSNBC were reporting from within Gaza, celebrities (America’s
royals) were tweeting daily messages of peace and understanding for Gazans, and Israel’s
election for prime minister was only months in the future. The potential answers for the
question “what about Gaza?” had never been more diverse. The most important variable
of this conflict is the presence of technology. The difference in this conflict is not what it
shows or mentions more. Rather, it is the amount of information that technology makes
available to viewing publics.

It is unlikely even half a decade ago that technology would have been able to
circulate Ayman Mohyeldin’s eye witness account of child casualties to the extent it can
now. Nor could technology capitalize on the audience outrage of his removal from Gaza
and his inability to report on the incident. The wails of Gazan mothers would never be
heard, their stories never told, and the ruins of their densely populated city never seen. All
of these factors work together to illustrate the atmosphere of silence not only around
Gazan voices and their narratives but also around the international publics that work to
support and circulate a counter narrative of Gaza. By discussing this silence as a
deliberate rhetorical tactic of the media rather than as a result of some cosmic backing, a
space in the conversation for counterpublics can be created.

**The Media and ‘Us’**

While criticism of the media’s agenda is labeled everything from paranoia to anarchist, the basis for criticism is quite legitimate when examining the vast differences between its assumed and actual function. I have discussed the mainstream media’s function as an advertising platform to explain the connection between marketable ideological narratives and the audiences that buy and consume them. What is thought to be the true purpose of the media is vastly different than this conception. Conceived after the American Revolution, the media was considered a “counterweight to government,” (Chomsky 15) and the agendas of its elite members. The iron fist of England and the monarchy had left the newly minted American public both familiar with and concerned about political representation. At the time, the population was no stranger to being kept in perpetual silence regarding the political process. To assuage these fears, the people put their hope in the printed media to function as a “cantankerous, obstinate, ubiquitous press, which must be suffered by those in authority to preserve the right of the people to know, and to help the population assert meaningful control over the political process” (Chomsky 15). This view of the media is referred to as the Jeffersonian Model, its namesake based on the devoted state’s rights advocate and federal government watchdog Thomas Jefferson.

Despite the appealing aspirations of the Jeffersonian model, its focus on grassroots activity and monitoring the elite never truly became the media’s modus operandi. In fact, American print media began controlling and censoring information almost directly after the Revolutionary War. Despite the continuing influence of wealth in
the media, the work of the Jeffersonian Model is still sought by the public; not only in the original medium of print, but in the newest forms of mass media. These forms include: talk shows, news programs from Rachel Maddow to Bill O’Reilly, statements on social media and public events that can now be documented and spread by technology. It is evident that this hope for media refereeing still persists, as one of the most frequent criticisms that are leveled against the media is that it is too soft on public officials. There also remains the cautious relationship between state and federal levels of government when deciding the boundaries of their respective powers. These types of critiques make it obvious that the Jeffersonian status of this state to federal relationship is integral to the history of the media.

However, the use of the media as a public gateway to what were formerly elite matters has waned in light of the media’s current work to fashion a homogenous, dissent fearing public. Western publics are, for the most part, informed rather than consulted on relevant issues. While Americans fervently cling to their annual right to voice in voting, a choice between the rich men who will cut taxes versus the rich men who will raise them is a poor substitute for including the plebeians in aristocratic affairs. American publics are rarely presented with a complex and comprehensive view of a story, nor are they encouraged to seek outlets with the goal of journalism as opposed to advertising. American mass media delivers a heavily constructed and highly censored version of world events that has been approved for ‘real American’ consumption while remaining impervious to the critiques of Jeffersonian watchdog agencies. It is now more apparent than ever that working as a counterweight to the political elite is not (if it ever was) the function of American mass media. What then, accounts for the mass media’s behavior
and agenda? Pioneered by intellectuals such as Alex Carey, Chomsky and Edward S. Herman, the alternative conception of mass media explains that it will “present a picture of the world which defends and inculcates the economic, social and political agendas of the privileged groups that dominate the domestic economy” (Chomsky 15).

Despite the undeniable evidence of this exact misconduct from mass media, drawing the publics’ analytical gaze from the Jeffersonian model to the alternative model has proven to be a Herculean effort. Even in the face of statistics, numbers, graphs, intellectuals, scandals, controversy, whistleblowing, and document leaking, the corporate media outlet FOX NEWS remains the most watched and trusted news source in America (GassPolitico.com). Perhaps the doubt of the public in the authenticity of the alternative model comes from the very word alternative, which carries a historically based hierarchical connotation. Indeed, the fact that the most apt description of American mass media is known as the alternative model shows the amount of stock the public has put into the media working for them. Whatever the source of the reluctance, publics are still directed toward deliberately biased outlets which leaves them open to the media’s teachings against dissatisfaction. As publics and their discourse are self-organized, any type of change in the Palestinian narrative must start with mass media publics understanding that the media’s information is motivated by an agenda meant to discourage and discipline the mind.

Obviously the media must remain under public scrutiny. Its wealth, power, and ability to transport ideologies across political factions and the obedience the mass media commands practically mandates it. It is important to understand that a greater knowledge of the alternative media model is not required just to exacerbate the conversation about
the wealth gap. Framing the issue in terms of expense ends the conversation at exactly the point at which it should begin. It is not that the elite are unscrupulously spending money and ruining the media. It is the effects that this spending has on the non-elite and uninformed publics that matter. Because the media serves their societal purpose by “the way they select topics, distribute their concerns, frame issues, filter information, focus their analyses, through emphasis, tone, and a whole range of other techniques” (Chomsky 15), its publics have come to see their work as natural. Yet the choices made by the media about what is important (to its specific viewers) and the terministic screens they employ to lead the logic of their viewers are nothing close to natural. These behaviors, both the reporting style of mass media and the audiences’ easy access to popular mass media, are both rhetorical. Greater concern over terrorism rather than an issue like gun control or corporate welfare is not something innate to the American citizenry. Rather, it is the result of greater rhetorical persuasion and emphasis on one issue over another. Because terrorism and specific view points on the issue are allowed greater rhetoricity in the public sphere, other viewpoints on terrorism and other issues are overshadowed and the possible conversations around them underdeveloped.

The diverse American publics are not predisposed to care more about Middle Eastern terrorist than terrorism from other areas of the world. Nor are they unpatriotic for not believing that this new country known as America has a fated nemesis in a millennia’s old civilization. But the media’s implications that all of the sensical and truly American people hold these truths as evident constantly work to override the fact that there is no single, homogenous, American audience. The urgency of issues, fearing the foreigner, the sense of community, and engagement with a larger audience is cultivated
by mass media to condition its audiences. This naturalization of what the media is doing as what the media does (or is supposed to do) has created the incentive to internalize rather than analyze, making easier than ever to digest rather than ingest. This means that what the media says, despite the means through which they become capable of saying it, goes unquestioned and its ideas nearly automatically becoming a part of who we are and the way we think. It is a different type of warfare. Psychological and pathetic (by which I mean pathos) rather than physically domineering. Yet it is exactly the course needed to derive consent and eliminate opposition from those who are categorized and domineered in incredibly similar ways to those Palestinian civilians.

**The Importance of Counter Narratives**

The first step in attempting to aid the emergence of a new narrative is to understand their function amongst publics and counterpublics. However, before I illustrate how counter narratives can enter into the public conversation, I will first clarify the meanings of the terms public, public issues, and counterpublics, along with their specific roles in the public sphere. Michael Warner writes in “Publics and Counterpublics” that “[a] public is a space of discourse organized by nothing other than discourse itself. It is autotelic; it exists only as the end for which books are published, shows broadcast, Web sites posted, speeches delivered, opinions produced. It exists by virtue of being addressed” (2). Publics are more than large groups of people or those that share a close proximity. As Warner points out, publics exist only by being referred to in text and discourse. Consequently, publics gain their public definitions via the texts and various media they or others create for public consumption. The opportunity to represent one’s own group is not as universal as this theoretical explanation would allow us to
believe. Publics often gain the opportunity to speak for others, resulting in the rhetorical domination of one group over the other. The publics this project has analyzed so far are the publics of the mass media. American mass media has a lot of monetary support behind its work, ensuring its circulation. Because of financial backing, the ideologies and conclusions available to publics on domestic and international issues are typically those of the dominant and backed publics.

These issues that are discussed through discourses and texts are known as public issues. According to Trevor Perry Giles in “Ideology and Poetics in Public Issue Construction: Thatcherism, Civil Liberties, And ‘Terrorism’”, a public issue is

A site of political meaning constructed by a rhetorical leadership attempting to secure ideological acquiescence from the members of the community in which it is constructed. It is a historically particular, ideologically significant stasis that emerges from the rhetorical construction of events, happening, situations, or exigencies. (Giles 2)

Certainly the mass media’s reporting on Israel-Palestine is an example of political and influential leaders attempting to secure “ideological acquiescence” from citizens, with the conditions manufactured to ensure the continued cooperation from the citizenry comprising the hegemonic structure. The ideographs of <freedom> and <terrorism> are a part of acquiring this acquiescence. There are also the historical and social dimensions of the public issue, which makes the ideograph and its synchronic and diachronic elements perfect for analysis of public issues and rhetorical pleas for acceptance.

The presence of rhetoric in public issues is to be expected. The rhetorical construction of public issues involves a “fusion of ideographs with poetic structures” to
“naturalize political rhetorics for the purpose of securing collective acquiescence” (Giles 2). In doing so, politicians and political commentators are using rhetoric to “construct and define issues for the ‘publics’ attention, and second, to respond to those issues as they have been constructed and defined,” (3) usually by offering rhetorics addressed to them. This conjures the work of Richard Vatz and his claims of rhetoricians giving both salience to an issue along with the language to properly characterize a rhetorical situation. This means that everything from the definition of a public issue to the boundaries of the community is defined by the use of rhetoric.

In the public sphere, publics or people that have a membership in a specific discourse community who emerge to contradict the “rhetorical construction” of the leadership are known as counterpublics. Counterpublics emerge when strangers who “find commonality in a specific issue or difference are excluded from the dominant public conversation and come together to represent their embodied experiences and definitions as legitimate” (Warner 12). Counterpublics often emerge as an opposing or opposite entity of a dominant force. In this case, the domination refers to the incredible influence a single discourse community has on subjects, opinions, definitions, and the circulation of information. Despite the word counter in its title, counterpublics are not necessarily smaller or inferior to a dominant public. They are an attempt to introduce a different worldview or perspective into the public conversation and widen what Nancy Fraser refers to as the “discursive space” (13) which allows the needs of others to “disseminate . . . into ever widening areas” (67). These rhetorical interactions between publics help the public sphere to preserve its rhetorical nature through the addresses and persuasions of interested publics, rather than transform into something characterized or
ranked by class, market, or religion. These rhetorical interactions not only take on a different narrative, but also utilize “alternative norms of public speech” (Fraser 61) that work to circulate the message of these counterpublics amongst the dominant narrative.

The point that this project makes about counterpublics is that they require this discursive space for their initial emergence. They must be allowed their rhetoricity if they are to become capable of representing the ideas of its members. Warner states that a counterpublic “finds itself in conflict” (80) with the dominant social group as counterpublics deviate from the premises that allows a dominant culture to understand itself as a public (81). This sense of conflict further explains why the space for counterpublics around the Israel-Palestine situation is constantly diminished, leaving them unable to acquire textual circulation and public support in the few instances that they are allowed to surface uninterrupted. Because of the possibility of a more Palestine supportive counterpublic gaining momentum among the masses, the instances where they could emerge are closed, nearly pre-emptively, and the only remaining option is for publics to resort to the popular and available narratives for their understanding of others. Using rhetorical strategy to intentionally silence one group to preserve public consent from another is the continuance of the hegemonic structure. Our narrow interpretations will continue to exist without the increased proliferation of more rhetorically representative Middle Eastern texts, cultures, and history in our most far reaching and easily accessed outlets.

**Demonstrating the Humanitarian Crisis in Gaza**

With the importance of counterpublics established, the discussion can now go beyond the theory into application. It is clear that the American viewing public has seen
and heard their fair share of <terrorism> (what it is, who it is, what it looks like) from their media. What they haven’t heard is a rationale that looks beyond the battle between <democracy> and <terrorism> to the problems of violence and inhumane treatment. Despite the diligence of non-mass media sources to differentiate between Palestinians and their Hamas government, the media’s conflation of people and government remains popular. Because their narratives have the potential to disrupt the global obedience held by elites, international accounts are often argued by the mass media as reckless, dangerous, pro-terrorist, or a cocktail of all of these factors. So effective is the media at maintaining the status quo that wishes of Gazan peace from the most fortunate of citizens is met with critique and disdain (Rahimi TheTelegraph.co.uk).

Obviously, the current counter narratives that circulate around Gaza and Palestine are not having the necessary impact in terms of the public sphere and what I would call ‘making a space’ for ever more counter narratives and publics. Most attribute this failure to the focus that is given to Hamas and the possible justifications of their actions in light of Israel’s economic blockade and other human rights violations toward Palestine. These discussions often require a greater knowledge of the region, the cultural history of the Arab world as well as a thorough understanding of Israel-Palestine’s complex and intertwined timeline; all of which have been effectively phased out of the media-sanctioned analyses that we see currently. While Hamas should remain a part of the conversation, efforts to separate and reframe the humanitarian crisis in Gaza will not succeed if civilian life remains an afterthought to which terrorist said what and when. Focusing on the terrorist status of Hamas only obscures the destruction of Gazan daily life and contributes to the absorption of the majority women and child population into the
The following section is an attempt to construct a more civilian based narrative; one that crafts the situation in Gaza as a violation of human rights and security that requires immediate action. This section will pull from several sources outside of the mass media to transcend the ideologically heavy labels halt other veins of conversation and serve as an example as a counternarrative for Gazans. A majority of the sources focus on an Israeli-Palestinian engagement that took place in the summer of 2014. Additional sources come from governing or international entities such as the U.N. whose comments on the conflict and the realities of civilian life only augment the call for interference that fringe journalists and public intellectuals are currently voicing. Focusing on the Israeli shelling of Gaza, the event is one that is usually ripe for the traditional American versus September 11th type terrorists. Rather than analyze the attack itself and debate which side had the right to fire the first missile, this narrative will focus on the aspects of the conflict that were kept from mass media’s screens or thought to be unimportant to winning the War on Terror. The fact that such an opposite narrative could be constructed from what is traditionally a mass media hot spot only shows that the so called innate hatred of American freedom that is attributed to Palestinian Arabs is not a biological fact but a rhetorical construction bent on achieving mass acquiescence.

Those living in the post September 11th world are no stranger to the mainstream Middle-Eastern terrorist narrative. An ideograph in its own rite, September 11th has become the rhetorical representation of an “attack on the beliefs, values, and attitudes,” (Long 5) and world views of the United States. Those on the other end of the accusing fingers are the shadowy figures known as terrorists. Though terrorism can take on many
forms, post September 11th American culture has become quite comfortable in defining these figures as dark, violent, Arab, Islamic, Middle-Easterners with archaic clothing choices and lengthy names. Distinguishing among Iraqi’s, Iranians, Palestinians, Afghans, and other countries connotatively known in America as terrorist nations is inconsequential. All of these countries fall under the blanket term of terrorism and thus have become part of the political public memory of that September morning. The American mass media rationale for September 11th and the modus operandi of all terrorism are constructed by binaries and in adversarial terms: The Islamic caliphate is the enemy of the Christian nation, their traditions a threat to American exceptionalism, and their agenda the anti-thesis to democratic freedoms. In reality, there is barely a time in the Occident-Orient history that is not characterized by an adversarial relationship. This trend has continued into the modern era.

The emphasis on the battles between these two parts of the world can easily be attributed to the constant military presence in the Middle East, which frames Western interaction through a narrative of violence and victory. Consider the Crusades, the Iranian Hostage Crisis, the western response to Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, the Gulf War, Desert Storm, the Iraq War, and the War in Afghanistan in addition to conflicts brewing in Palestine and Syria. Time after time, the American mainstream narrative has provided audiences with the fears and reasons for intervention in the Middle East. And while all of these conflicts are separated by time, region, religion, ethnicity, circumstances, and history, rarely does the western audience encounter an opportunity where they are encouraged to recognize the different ideologies of fundamental and modern Islam or to remember that Palestinians were not involved in September 11th. What matters to the
mainstream narrative is only to repeat the idea that terrorism comes from that region, from those people, with these features, this religion, and nowhere else. Man, woman, child, moderates, martyrs, are obsolete categories. The entire region of the Middle East has been quarantined and any action appropriate for terrorists (not terrorism) is appropriate for the countries that fit this bill.

This is the situation in which we find Palestine and the conceptualization of Gazan citizens. Undoubtedly, history is used. Palestine and the justification of the treatment of its citizens is a prime example of this. It is because the incredible amount of rhetorical privilege granted to the mainstream that their truth has become the truth, while other worldviews stand forgotten or are simply unknown for general or non-expert audiences. Such rhetorical dominance can be greatly attributed to the lack of counterpublics around the issue, as they are an integral component in sustaining the communication of different embodied knowledges and democratic debate. The following sections will identify some of the counterpublics that have emerged from mainstream dominance and are using history to tell a different narrative.

The first source of a new narrative emerges from powerful international bodies. The most important institution currently is the United Nations. Despite having their actions frequently blocked by Western powers, the United Nations has long classified the behavior of Israel as both a violation of human rights (Ian Black, The Guardian) and a violation of Article 51 pertaining to matters of war or conflict between two countries. Article 51 is the origin of the “right to defense” argument that is so adamantly used to defend Israel’s level of force against Palestine. Article 51 states that a UN nation has “the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs,”
(UN.org) and that they are authorized “to take at any time such action as it deems necessary in order to maintain or restore international peace and security” (UN.org). The term international is key in understanding when a nation can evoke article 51 as a justification of action as it stipulates that the attack must come from a separate, foreign entity that is beyond the country’s national boundary. Israel’s status as an occupying power of Palestine makes it impossible for them to invoke this article as a legitimate defense. While two separate warring countries are allowed by the rules of war to engage each other as such, Israel’s control and near ownership of Palestinian land designates them as an occupying power in Palestine. Article 51 clarifies that the economic relationship between Israel and Palestine prevents Israel from classifying and treating Palestine as an invading force. Rather, Palestinians fall under the obligation of Israel as civilian citizens and Palestine being a part of the Jewish entity. In short, article 51 declares that Israel is firing on their own people. A line of discourse such as this directly challenges the mass media Ideographs, as it replaces the argument of Israel’s freedom to protect itself with the image of a country terrorizing its own citizens.

With this line of thought, interference into Israel’s behavior would seem inevitable. This is perhaps why the narrative remains in pieces and Israel largely unpunished. Because the available rhetorics construct Israel as a Western-que entity that is being attacked without provocation (reminiscent of the American on September 11th) their actions are interpreted as the right to defense while the terrorism label negates the basic considerations other types of combatants receive in warfare. The lack of enforcement of the Occupation Laws is blatantly apparent in present day policies toward the two countries. Currently, Israel’s illegal settlements in what is the occupied West
Bank are known but never actively stopped by any power. Their behavior toward Palestinian civilians is overlooked and their absolute control over Gazan electricity, imports, food supply, air space, territorial waters, and taxes are never enough to legally force Israel into fulfilling their responsibility to Palestinian civilians as an occupying power (Aldershoff and Waelbroeck, European Union News). Truly, the discourse for such an act hardly exists.

The United Nations has also described the deplorable conditions of Gaza as inhuman and has reprimanded the situation that has produced these conditions. For example, the U.N. has raised the concern for war crimes in Gaza after the Palestinian death toll rocketed past 600 following the 16 day shelling of the Gaza Strip by Israeli military. Defining terrorism as “the killing of civilians as a means of furthering political or military goals,” Greenwald used his July 2014 article to bring attention to the mounting civilian death toll in Gaza. Compiling the civilian death tolls for both Israel and Palestine over a two week period, Greenwald blatantly highlights the discrepancy between Palestinian deaths: 826 out of 1,101, and Israeli civilian deaths, three out of 56 (Firstlook.org). Additionally, his report found that while “95% of the Israeli death toll” has been soldiers, at least “75% of the Palestinian death toll” has been civilian women and children (Glenn Greenwald, The Intercept). The Guardian reported on July 23, 2014 the U.N. high Commissioner for human rights Navi Pillay’s comments on Israel’s 16 day assault on Palestine: “There seems to be a strong possibility that international law has been violated, in a manner that could amount to war crimes (Yolande Knell, BBCNews). Democracy Now soon reported that the same assault destroyed Gaza’s only power plant, which was responsible for 30% of Gaza’s total electricity supply. (Sharif Abdel
Kouddous, *Democracy Now*). A few days afterward saw Greenwald’s report on the death toll amongst Palestinian citizens and soldiers versus Israel citizens and soldiers. Finally, UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon spoke on the inhumanity in the suffering of the civilian Palestinian population. While visiting children in Gaza’s Jabaliya Refugee Camp, Moon stated “I met so many of the beautiful children of Gaza. More than 500 were killed in the fighting – many more were wounded. What did they do wrong? Being born in Gaza is not a crime.”(Peter Beaumont, *The Guardian*). The U.N has yet to enact any significant change in Palestine.

Greenwald has also tackled the Ayman Mohyeldin controversy at MSNBC. What is interesting about the Mohyeldin scandal is its powerful contradiction of the ideographs that have come to dominate the Israel-Palestine conversation. Ayman, an incredibly reputable war journalist who had been reporting in Gaza since 2009, was immediately pulled from the scene by NBC executive David Verdi after witnessing the killing of three children playing soccer on a Gazan beach during the 16 day shelling. Despite Ayman’s excellent reporting, which was often described as a bringer of humanity to the Gazan’s story, as well as his fluency in Arabic, he was replaced before he could report on the killing by Richard Engel. Engel, despite having not witnessed this tragedy, was given the opportunity to report about the deaths on MSNBC. Mohyeldin was able to send a tweet about the incident and publish pictures of the grieving parents but assumed a period of internet and media silence in the aftermath of his replacement. He would not surface to describe the event on air for several days. NBC has yet to give a credible excuse as to the reason behind his removal nor have they reported a reason as to why he was not allowed to report on the issue despite being on the scene.
In a printed interview with Democracy Now’s Amy Goodman, Greenwald cites the fear of major media outlets angering U.S. Israel supporters as the motivation for removing Mohyeldin. Despite the crowding in the public sphere, it is possible that Mohyeldin’s humanizing reporting along with the pathos behind the image of grieving mothers could have been an incredibly persuasive and rhetorically powerful visual. Greenwald then stated that “one of the things you almost never see in major American media reporting is anything that shows the suffering of Palestinians” (Goodman), which has changed with the advent of social media and the agency it bestows upon Gazans to record and circulate Israeli military action inside Gaza. Greenwald’s comments on Palestinian suffering also draws our gaze to the wailing faces of the grieving mothers. Suffice to say, Ayman’s photos do not communicate the faces of women who have endorsed the culture of martyrdom for their children. It would be a tremendous task to persuade me otherwise. Meanwhile, Mohyeldin’s attempts to dismantle the assumption of the culture of martyrdom have been met with disdain and accusations of being a “Hamas sympathizer” (Goodman) and a doubter of the “U.S. government and Israeli position” (Goodman).

The blatant juxtaposition of conflicting images of freedom is what lends itself the most to this tragedy. Freedom is the prey of terrorism. It is clear that the idea of freedom represented in the mass media is a freedom that belongs to American decision makers and their actions as the global power. Its reach in global affairs is unprecedented and its support of Israel against Hamas unquestioned. In the case of Ayman’s account, freedom is this group of little boys playing soccer in the sunshine. In the midst of a decimated and war torn territory, where 44% of the already shrunken Gazan territory is designated a no
man’s land by Israel (Rosenfeld) and agriculture and livestock destruction has resulted in “mounting food insecurity” (Shaoul), playing and running on even a polluted beach (Al-Mughrabi) must feel wonderful. Ayman’s account of the tragedy casts the popular freedom of defense argument in a stark light. A new and less American centric narrative already exists. The question is, are the publics of mass media gaining access to these types of cover ups and political maneuverings? Or, are they subjected to a rhetoric that bypasses the tangible in favor of abstract concepts of glory for an imagined homeland? The answer to that question comes easily when you take into account the amount of work one has to do in order to find these articles and piece together the story of only one shelling incident. There are no full stories, nightly segments or hyperlinked article trails that categorize newsworthy stories. This type of information is not featured, it is not debated, and it is not discussed. According to the rules of a public, its lack of address means that the resulting public of this dialogue doesn’t exist.

There is and will continue to be persuasive lines of logic on the relationship between the two countries, as well as the rhetorical representations of Gazans as extensions of their democratically elected Hamas government. Should the current media trends around the American narrative go uncontested, the Palestinian point of view will continue to be marginalized in mainstream journalism and the creation of a counter-public to the current narrative will go unaccomplished. In other words, the current use of <terrorism> and <democracy> will continue their rhetorical work in nurturing the strong association between Islam and terrorism, adding to the environment of fear and accusation that has surrounded the middle eastern population for some time. In light of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations Michael Sheehan’s projection
of another possible two decades (Greenwald, *The Guardian*) in the War on Terror, it stands to reason that the media will continue to have a great deal to report on, including the decade’s long dispute between Israel and Palestine. Consequently, working to see mainstream media’s version as exactly that—one constructed version of a truth in a historical conflict—can then allow for the presence of other ideas and narratives to enter into the conversation; narratives that better rhetorically construct the citizens of Palestine, the diverse values of the American populace, and the Islamic populations that are portrayed as the face of global fundamental terrorism.

**Conclusion**

Just a few months into the research for what would become this project, I came across this tidbit in my local newspaper. On October of 2014, an Illinois newspaper named *The Pantagraph* received a question about the population density of Gaza in comparison to McLean County (the home county of the magazine). In comparing the 1.8 million citizens of Gaza to the approximately 170,000 citizens of McLean County, the newspaper’s Bill Flick wrote:

> Although big in the news, the Gaza Strip is 8 ½ times smaller than Mclean County (139 square miles compared to 1,186 miles)….If the county had the population density of Gaza, incredibly, it would have around 15.3 million residents. That would also make Mclean County population larger than all but for U.S. states (California, Texas, New York and Florida). (The Pantagraph.com)

How striking it was to find this in a local newspaper, when I had yet to find anything remotely similar in larger media outlets. In what is always a conversation about aspirations, allies and enemies, patriotism and come uppance, these numbers are
arresting. Subsequent research would find this information, its flummoxed tone, its disbelief at the proportion, and its precise portrayal of the spatial reality of the Gaza occupation, to be a rarity.

There always seemed to be a reason for something to come before the destruction of the Gazan population during the research phase of this project. Rarely did I find instances where these civilians were given precedence over the haunting images of September 11th, the horror of the Holocaust, the economic relationships between nations, domain over the Holy Land or simple partisan disagreement. And even rarer was the use of the welfare of citizens and their unjust treatment as a determinant for the next course of action. Rather, an endless waltz of rockets, broken cease fires, and professions of support for a two state solution continues to serve as diplomacy and foreign policy. Even with the knowledge that the media is but a sliver of the true public opinion (which is incredibly democratic for the most part) their stories are still the go to for understanding.

The media’s influence and their mass circulation of these ideographs have made it possible for even the most invested individuals to be screened from the idea Palestinian humanity. It is a hater of American freedom that wants Palestinian peace, an unpatriotic citizen that criticizes military action, and a threat to domestic interests to be soft on Israel. These are the implications that are buried in the ideograph and the message that is communicated to the millions in a cyclic 24 hour news apparatus. And while these analyses of the media are riddled with rhetorical concepts and a sense of the ivory tower, their claims of public obedience and absorption can be seen in the everyday questions publics pose and the conversations they have with each other. At a Q&A with Noam Chomsky on a peaceful Palestine and the media, an audience member says “there’s also
the different mentality between the Arabs and Jews that figures into it too, don’t you think—isn’t that always going to get in the way of peace? Chomsky answers, “They’re the same kind of people, they have the same kind of mentality. They bleed when they’re cut, they mourn when their children are killed. I’m not aware of any difference between them” (135). The fact that we have gotten to a point where a statement such as this belongs to someone designated as a public intellectual rather than one human being looking at another shows that the work of the unrepresented masses must soon commence if we hope to create more than just a slight space for dissidence.
CHAPTER V
EPILOGUE

Any master’s student will tell you that for one part of one hellish year, you live and breathe your thesis. You think about it before you go to bed, you see its influence in all the corners of your mind, and feel the previous night’s writing thrumming through the day’s signatures. The amount of times you are asked to explain it, challenge it, complicate it for yourself and then simplify it for others could possibly bring you to tears. In the Illinois State English Department the saying goes, if you can explain your thesis in a few sentences, you know you will finish it. At my thesis proposal, which is the beginning of all things to come, in the few casual minutes before the proceedings, I was asked to perform this very feat. A professor who was not on my committee asked, “Savanna, what is your thesis about”? The sentence I gave was comprehensive but uncomplicated. All of the terms were in the right place, all of its intention perfectly communicated. I saw the eyebrows of a much respected professor lift up. He replied, “You know you’ll finish when you can explain your thesis in one sentence”. Of course I smiled. Validation is always nice to hear. But there was never any doubt as to whether or not I would finish this thesis. Or that Israel-Palestine would be the topic. Because while I had been writing the thesis for months, I had been living with these ideas all of my life.

I was born in the swampy countryside of North Carolina. It is a place that even the natives consider an unfortunate interruption between North Carolina’s tea colored beach water and the clay hills of the piedmont. Not much has changed. The region retains some
of the highest usage of colonial English in the country. ABC stores still have sly, back door entrances for preachers who deny their alcoholism on Sunday mornings, and the elderly still have a seat when it rains. “The Lord is doin’ ‘is work Savanna Lynn,” my grandma would say. “Now hush”!

Nothing is outside of the Evangelical grasp, of the fire and brimstone rhetoric. The world could end any day now. Yesterday would have been better. Under weeping willows we read the Old Testament more than the New. I have always known more about the ark than the cross. Early on, we internalize the word gentile- Greek for heathen- and learn that we are the lucky adoptees into the Jewish family. Into Jesus’ family. And for this, we are to remain grateful and reverent. A preacher on Sunday says, “The historical suffering of the Jewish people, Jesus’ people, is something we gentile sinners can never have”. He has to wipe his mouth with a dove colored cloth, his tenacity brings so much saliva to the corners of his mouth. This suffering, it is not ours, so we can’t have it. We didn’t feel it, so we can’t go back and touch it. We don’t understand it, so we can’t question it. To do so is to doubt both the design of our only salvation along with its grand architect.

This is the incontrovertible Zionism the swamp children learn. This is what we know when another building in Gaza falls, when the World Trade Center collapsed, when the Gulf War began, when we leave Sunday school for the first time. Defying this lifelong logic was to interrupt the tribal traditions of my family and risk their scorn. But the sense of wrongness that I felt when I heard these family teachings bloomed early, and has always shown in my eyes even when the words were not allowed to leave my lips.

While it may not be as extreme as North Carolina’s version, Zionism is still a widely held belief in the United States. For a politician, to be soft on Israel is to wave
goodbye to the presidential nomination. For the everyday civilian, disputing the tie between Zionism and America is dirtier than any Wall Street deal. In a time now gone, academic freedom was enough to protect an intellectual’s right to free inquiry. A few months before I presented my thesis, Professor Steven Salaita was fired from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. The local public was in an uproar over Salaita’s tweets on the 2014 Israel-Palestine conflict, the very conflict this project addresses. His ideas were labeled disrespectful to Israel and he was denied both tenure and employment. Ripples of disbelief swept through the academic community. The aftermath of his termination was a time where I had to consider the future of my thesis and my future as an academic very carefully. I had always seen a PhD in my future, but suddenly I saw my error. I had wrongly assumed that in a country where the beliefs of the Ku Klux Klan, anti-vaccination groups, creationists, religious fundamentalists, the NRA and climate change deniers were respected, that I could make the point that one historical genocide does not justify another. Salaita’s termination from his university proved that assumption wrong.

Soon came the January of my final semester and the opportunity to write an original piece on the tragedy of Palestine. What came about was a cautious compromise. I would continue with the Israel-Palestine conflict, but would stay in the academic world of objectivity and wear the mask of a neutral intellectual. I crafted this sense of reluctance in my thesis not only to avoid the possible consequences of protesting the uncontested power of Zionism, but to keep the audience’s attention where it was most needed. Going through with the project meant that only pieces of my conviction could come through. It is written by me, but it is not about me. It is about Gaza. It is for Gaza. And it is with
Gaza. And while I feel it is ridiculous to suppress the natural feeling of rage at the idea of genocide, I couldn’t give up the opportunity to write this kind of thesis. I have carried this paper with me, within me, for years. It had to be written, even if it meant keeping a constant awareness of boundaries in my mind and pen. This thesis sprung from my questions, my answers, my anger, my memories, my embodied knowledge, my need to feel, and my hope for Gazans. The possible consequences were simply not enough to take that hope away from me. May this be the first of many projects to come.
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