



Rhetoric and Communications E-Journal

A peer reviewed scientific journal, ISSN 1314-4464

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Rhetoric and Communications, Issue 4, July 2012

Then and Now: Reflections and Implications in concern of 9/11

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Abstract: A long-term American-Bulgarian research was done in concern with the terror act on the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York, the Pentagon in Washington, DC. It was a psycholinguistic study of how 270 editorials from five different newspapers sought to make sense of an initially incomprehensible set of events. These newspapers were the American *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, the Bulgarian *Sega*, the Russian *Izvestia*, and the English *Times*. The meaning of possessions and, ultimately, of time and the transitoriness of things, is very different in Western and Eastern European cultures. That was the reason five and ten years later – the reflection and the meaning of this American tragedy for the world history to be studied again as it was reflected in the print mass media of East-West cultures. Some of the linguistic results of this research are discussed in this article.

Keywords: event meanings; mass media reflections; terrorist acts; historical references; framing terrorism; breaking news.

The feelings of anxiety and emptiness left by the events of 9/11 are mostly gone now; what remains is a certain inconvenience at the airport combined with a set of memories that even now can still call up powerful images of that day and week. These images and memories, like other images and memories related to events that produce a break in the flow of personal and historic time, are photographic in detail and provide unmistakable mnemonic markers leading back to September 11, 2001. Then, too, there is still an experience of melancholy (together with some anger) over those who died such horrible deaths without ever knowing how or why they were chosen for their fate. Looking at videotapes of the second plane smashing into the World Trade Center still has a surreal quality to it, as if happening in slow motion, in someone else's world.

These reflections and feelings represent personal musings, an inner landscape of pain and disbelief. But 9/11 also has a public face that concerns allies and enemies, religious values, and evolving political problems that result from a distillation of how the 9/11 attacks were understood both by America and by the rest of the world. In terms of contemporary political history, the events of 9/11 can be, and have been, used to define the successes and failures of the Bush presidency, the possibility of a run for the presidency by Rudolph Giuliani, the mayor of New York City at the time of the attacks, as well as an ongoing test of America's resiliency and will. They also have been used to clarify the limits of interrogation techniques permitted under the U.S. Constitution as these apply to citizen and presumed terrorist alike.

All of these problems and possibilities were either explicitly mentioned, or intimated, by editorial writers in countries as diverse as the United States, Russia, Bulgaria and the United Kingdom¹. In terms of the two American newspapers serving the cities that were attacked – the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* – the shock was deeply felt, with the Times devoting some 20 editorials solely to comforting the citizens of its city. Despite expressions of concern, both newspapers also reminded the Bush administration of civil liberties guaranteed by the Constitution to all citizens, even those sharing ethnic origins with the perpetrators of an attack. The US government, for its part, sought to justify harsh procedures for suspected terrorists, some of the most egregious of which took place in the camp at Guantánamo Bay. On a more positive note, the administration set up a Department of Homeland Security to protect the American homeland and its citizens; as for its enemies it pursued a War on Terror that began in Afghanistan and then shifted to Iraq before returning to Afghanistan, all in the first decade of the 21st Century. One can only wonder, when such events occur, what was learned during that year about the nature of Al Qaeda, the changing role of Islam in the world, the influence of mass media in validating terrorist attacks, and the implications of a more confident Russia seeking, once again, to be a major player on the international scene: in short, if anything was learned about the meaning and implications of 9/11 for the United States and the rest of the world.

When the focus of analysis shifts, even so slightly, to a concern with the meaning of an event or situation, a number of collateral issues also arise. Two of the more significant of these concern the process by which meaning is arrived at in the first place as well as the process by which these meanings are, or are not, turned into policy. Both the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* offered explicit guidelines for making policy decisions; in the words of the Times, the ideal process should be one that is open (not secret) and measured (not impulsive) while the ensuing action should be multi-national (not unilateral) and clear (not ambiguous). The process by which policy makers, not to mention editorial writers and/or ordinary citizens, arrive at the meanings they do is a more complex one. Fortunately, the English language provides some guidance in the form of two sets of relatively simple words capable of serving as metaphoric directions. The first of these revolves around the core words “seek”, “find” and “lose” while the second revolves around the core of “make”, “create” and “destroy.” In the case of the first set, meaning is seen to derive from a process of "seeking" or "looking for" a meaning which, while presently unknown, is assumed to be "out there, waiting to be found." Viktor Frankl's book about the Holocaust *Man's Search for Meaning* (1944) provides a good example of this approach both in its title and content. In the second approach, no pre-existing meaning is assumed; rather it is up to the individual or society to create such a meaning and then be responsible for its implications from that time forward [1]. Sartre (1943/1956) provides a philosophical rationale for this approach, which requires human beings to create their own meanings for people, things and events.

The implicit model used for describing how one goes about "finding a meaning" is the dictionary where the meaning of a word can always be "looked up and found" in a book "that knows." Despite its appeal, the dictionary offers a misleading analogy since not all events have a clear pre-existing meaning while, for another, it is not always clear that a clear meaning is possible. New situations, new things, and new people do not, by definition, have a precise present meaning thereby weakening the value of a dictionary analogy when it is most

¹ The research project was carried out by American-Bulgarian team including professors and students from University of Tennessee in Knoxville (UTK) (USA) and New Bulgarian University (NBU) and Sofia University (SU) for about 10 years period. As a result, a book was published by Pollio, Howard .R., Stoitsova, Tolya and Snellen, Anne, entitled “Life and Death in a Time of Terror”, 2011.

needed. It is at this point, however, that the idea of “creating a meaning” is strongest since, by definition, it concerns a situation in need of a name. Meaning in this view is about situations and things that are genuinely new and still in the process of changing thereby confounding the issue of whether meanings are “found” or “created.”

The Many Meanings of 9/11

Although the events of 9/11 seemed to require a clear meaning, such a meaning was relatively slow in being articulated. To be sure, provisional meanings were quickly developed by the United States in 2001 and used to provide direction for early policy decisions. These initial meanings of 9/11 – whether correct or not – helped to reelect George Bush to a second term as president as well as to promote the capture and imprisonment of "suspected terrorists" as a national priority. The specific meaning current in the early days, weeks, and months following the attack went something as follows: the attack on 9/11 was probably only the first of many attacks that were to take place against American interests and/or the American homeland if the United States does not destroy – or at least contain – the shadowy enemy responsible for these attacks. On the basis of this understanding, America would be in constant danger if it did not take decisive action and the United States had to win this war if the American system was to endure.

During the same period as the Bush Administration was operating on this understanding, newspapers in the United States and Europe continued to develop their own meanings for 9/11. One of the first of these considered the United States as the victim of an unexpected and largely unprovoked attack. Following this, other meanings – sometimes defined in metaphoric terms e.g. the United States is a "Sleeping Giant" – were proposed which, by year's end, came to define the events of 9/11 as a kind of “Test” of American actions under fire. The results of this "test" were to be evaluated in terms of America's ability to conduct itself on the basis of its own ideals of openness and democratic process. These meanings of 9/11 were not to be taken as the final word, only the next to emerge at the end of a year long period.

The ongoing attempts to develop additional meanings for 9/11 sometimes referred to analyses deriving from preexisting sources; here one of the more ominous was based on the pre existing metaphor a "clash of civilizations" first used by James Huntington in his 1996 book of approximately the same name. For the scenario deriving from this metaphor, which was expressed more than once in editorials dealing with 9/11, a war between the largely Christian countries of Europe and the United States and the largely Muslim countries of the Middle East combined with Asian nations such as Indonesia and Pakistan was inevitable not only because of religious differences but also because of economic ones. Other analogies expressing a similar meaning for 9/11 were couched in less extreme terms: the coming war, intoned the Times of London, would concern a conflict between "civilized" and "uncivilized" approaches to political actions and power; obviously the Times felt Britain would follow the civilized path as befits its historical perception of itself.

Considering these meanings in terms of their major metaphors, it is possible to think of them as connecting to a more extensive network of meanings. For example, the idea of 9/11 as a "test" not only draws upon an academic use but also on the idea of a game; e.g., a test match in cricket. These and other connotations invoke the possibility that there is always the possibility of failure. Once a metaphor set, such as the one having test at its figurative center, is used to create or at least express a meaning for 9/11 other implications soon come to mind. One group of psychological studies, in fact, seems to have been based on a meaning for

9/11 that viewed it as a damaging “traumatic event” that produced wounds in need of care. Research deriving from this figure of speech gave rise to all sorts of questionnaire studies dealing with the anxiety and pain caused by 9/11 rendered as an “ambush” that “wounded” New York City and the larger American culture.

A different meaning for 9/11 involves a set of ideas which viewed the attack as "an interruption" in the ordinary flow of life. Included in this set were other (metaphoric) terms for interruption: "break", "gap" and "fracture", all of which were interpreted as referring to time and place as well as to the human body. Each of these meanings would likely lead to a different action: if bodily trauma were the major metaphor, the first action would be to "diagnosis" America's wounds and then "take care of it (them)" by psychological or medical means. If the metaphor referred to a break in time, subsequent actions would have to recognize a temporal meaning to the attack and, on this basis, suggest a time-based remedy such as a memorial or a holiday.

Other meanings for 9/11 framed their analyses in some larger literary or dramatic framework. This was particularly noticeable in editorials appearing in the *Times of London* as well as in the *New York Times*. In the case of the Times of London the words and phrases used to comfort the "civilized" world were reminiscent of those used by Churchill during the Second World War. To the British reader, these echoes refer even further back to Shakespeare's play Henry V – more directly to the king's stirring speech just prior to the Battle of Agincourt. Viewing 9/11 as analogous to Agincourt allows the reader to conclude that the “civilized” forces were initially at a disadvantage: for the English at Agincourt in terms of number; for the Americans on 9/11 in terms of not being prepared. In both cases, the action suggested recognizes the event as a military campaign which demands the destruction of an attacking enemy. Although not so clearly articulated, *Izvestia* made an oblique reference to the victories of a General Polenta against the Turks in two separate military campaigns in the 18th century. *Izvestia* also made sporadic historical references to another significant general, Alexander Nevsky, who after his victory over the Swedes in 1240 at the Battle of Neves, gave its name to him as an honorific: Alexander Nevsky [2].

Somewhat along the same line, 9/11 was described as a mythic struggle between archetypal forces of good and evil. In these renditions, America was to understand the attack as a struggle involving moral issues dividing the radical Islamic world from that of the more settled world of Western religions such as Christianity and Judaism. In this context the war could be seen as a test of two different orientations to the meanings of life and death. Obviously, the stakes in such a conflict are extremely high and victory for one side will surely affect world history from then on.

A different reverberation to the 9/11 attacks concerns the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in World War II. A reminder of this connection is given by frequent use of the term "ground zero" to designate the site of the present attack. This term also has the potential to remind the reader of its initial meaning as the place at which a nuclear weapon is detonated. Although such a connection could have been developed in discussing the moral ambiguities involved in the use of nuclear weapons, it was not explicitly raised in any of the five newspapers. Despite this, the attacks on New York and Washington were understood as posing moral questions of their own.

Eventful Events: A Theoretical Interlude

The word *event* occurs in the vocabulary of different disciplines, three of the more important of which are history, natural science and religion. In Western religions

theologically significant events such as the Exodus or the Resurrection do not occur more than once. These singular events tend to have significant and long-lasting consequences that, in one way or another, were waited for, expected, and /or prophesied. In the case of physical science, at least since the time of Einstein, an event is understood as a fundamental entity of physical reality that is defined by its location in three dimensional space combined with a fourth dimension, that of time (Hawking, 1988) [3]. In the case of history an event is concerned with a significant happening that is important for thinking about issues of the present as well as of the past. In this connection, Gadamer (1977) points out that events belonging to the future also affect the past since they determine what we wish for, hope for, or want [4].

One element common to all three uses of the term event is a concern with time and change, where change refers to the impact of an event in bringing about something new, as a change from what was before. In religious matters, the impact of an event must be significant by definition (perhaps what a religious person might call a miracle) since it often represents the fulfillment of a promise for change by God. Included here are the promise and reality of the Resurrection as well as the promise of Canaan as inhabited by the children of Israel. Other happenings that could be termed events are concerned with changes designed to overcome an enemy – when the Red Sea closed on Pharaoh’s army or the sun stood still for Joshua.

In the case of history, time also appears in thinking about the nature of an event especially since a historical episode always has a retrospective and prospective aspect. This means that for an event to be defined as such it must have widely ramifying effects both in terms of what it brings about as well as how it reframes what went before. In the case of physical science, the relationship between events and time is relatively straightforward since for something to be considered a physical event it must occur more than once thereby allowing it to be the object of repeated observation and/or theoretical prediction. Having said this, it is necessary to point out that sciences such as geology and paleontology do make use of individual events or and/or objects in documenting changes in the physical world and the organisms that populate it.

Summarizing the major ideas treated figuratively by Sega yields a view of 9/11 as a historical event that shattered the flow of time and induced a feeling of fear in the United States and the world [5]. (Стоицова и кол). Of the 29 unique historical allusions made by Sega, two derive from the Bible and/or Koran, one from American history, one from Japanese history and 15 from more general European history, primarily from World War II; in fact, of the 15 events in the group termed Old History, 12 concerned events deriving from the Second World War. The category of New History contained 10 events, 9 of which concerned terrorist acts.

When physical science defines an event as real, it becomes available to the theorist or observer. The case, however, is different in religion and history where an event may not be noted as significant at the time it occurred but only becomes significant retrospectively when its consequences are reassessed by the theologian or the historian. Theological history, like all history, is written after the fact and significant events have to be “discovered” because they may not have been noted at the time they were taking place. This type of “discovery” is both a perceptual and a conceptual accomplishment of the historian, although the event is not solely a creation of keen intellect. Rather, for any description of an historical event (in a religious or historical context) there are two aspects to the process; for one, there is some artifact, document or event from the past, while for two there is some historian who notes the significance of that artifact or situation and is able to provide a coherent description of it

significance. A historical event is both found and created, although its creation is not *ex nihilo*, nor is its perception hallucinatory.

So the question remains, how do we perceive something as an event? One way of dealing with this question is in terms of an old adage that compares the perception of an object with the perception of an event: "Event is the time as Object is to space." This adage implies that for any happening to emerge as historically significant requires some background against which it can emerge as a figure. If the figure is something like an object, the background is space; if the figure is something like an event, the background is time. The sociologist and social philosopher Emile Durkheim must have been working on this issue when he advised sociology "to treat social facts as things." He, of course, did not mean that social facts (or events) are things, only that they can be perceived and conceptualized as if they were.

Once this possibility is grasped, the idea that a social fact such as an event is a perceptual entity offers a reasonable description of how social facts are experienced – as things. To complete this analysis we need to consider what is meant by the term *thing*, especially since the adage says *object*. Would the adage hold true if *thing* were substituted for *object*? As a starting place for an answer to this question, consider the words *thing* or *object* as used in ordinary speech. In this context, *object* is usually considered to describe an entity that is more clearly bounded than one described by the word *thing*. The etymology of both words makes this distinction even more sharply; *object* derives from *ob* and *ject*, where *ob* means "in the way of" and *ject* means "to throw." Hence, like its verb form "to object," the noun implies something in space that is in the way of vision and blocks out anything behind it. The entity labeled by the word *object* is as perceptually clear and well bounded as it is in the way.

The word *thing* has a different history. It derives from the Gothic word *theihs* meaning time, and from the Old High German word *ting*, meaning assembly. This latter meaning still appears in the contemporary word *Alting*, the Icelandic name for its legislative assembly. Thus, the history of *thing* defines it both as a coming together and a going apart over time. *Object*, on the other hand, implies an entity with clear boundaries that is able to "get in the way" of perception. Considered in the light of etymology, events that are thing-like are transitory and changeable whereas events that are object-like are well structured and durable. Both terms, however, are identified by their boundaries – as clear or fuzzy – and by time – as enduring or changeable.

When these insights are applied to the question of how to think about events, they lead to the conclusion that events are more like *things*, not *objects*. Equating *thing* with event and noting its relationship to *object*, suggests that the old adage may have been so intent on keeping space and time apart as to overlook the possibility that space and time can both serve as the relevant background for objects (and things). This state of affairs further suggests that the relationship of space to time described in physics is similar to the way it may be described in regard to the perception of events and objects; namely that space and time are best thought of as a single entity termed space-time. This similarity further suggests that events considered as things or objects not only involve spatial aspects but must also be thought of as having temporal aspects as well. The context for objects (and things) is not only space nor is the context for events only time; rather all three terms suggests an idea like space-time. Although it is possible to view the combination of space-time as suggesting a spatial component to any understanding of time, it can just as easily be used to suggest a temporal component to any understanding of space.

If the transformation of some happening into an event is conceptualized as an active human process and not a passive recognition of pre-existing properties, it seems reasonable to think about what factors might be involved. First of all, in English, there is the linguistic fact that a number of everyday time words – second, minute, hour, day, etc. – are not usually used in talking about history and that a great number of time words used in talking about history – period, era, age, epoch, etc. – are not frequently used in talking about everyday life. It is the same with Bulgarian language in which also exist such a different use of words concerning time. The set of words used in everyday language and those used in connection with historical events are similar to those used in English language. The simple listing of both word sets reiterates the idea that one property of time words in both everyday life and historical analysis is that they vary in duration. Since the words *long* and *short* provide one way of talking about duration, it is important to keep in mind that they refer to relative judgments. This means that the same amount of clock time (say one year), may be experienced as a long time by some individuals (children, for example) and short by other individuals (adults, for example). The idea of a "five-year plan" such as those employed during the Soviet period of Russian history, would probably be experienced as too short by the worker and impossible to understand by the Soviet child.

A second property defining an event is relative specificity, with *incident* connoting a more definite event than *happening*; a similar distinction can also be noted in comparing the terms *era* and *occasion*. Finally, at least for the moment, *event* also may be defined by its significance or importance. Usually this means that it brings about a change in some aspect of society, history, and/or personal biography. This criterion is usually only possible many years after the event has taken place, although some events such as the 9/11 attacks can be described as significant at the time they first take place.

The issue of uniqueness bears an additional relationship to the definition of an event particularly if it deals with issues of expectedness and unexpectedness. Expectation in physical science is an aspect of prediction, and only if an event repeats can it be predicted. For this understanding, prediction is one proof of understanding and each correct prediction yields greater confidence in the theory used to make the prediction. Predictability of a sort can also be noted in some unique cases; for example in a party to commemorate someone's 25th anniversary that will take place next week. Although, by definition, the party (and the anniversary) are unique events for the specific people involved, they also are predictable and no one is surprised to receive an invitation to something that is to happen five weeks later. While the event is unique, an anniversary is general and serves as one basis on which planning can take place. In the case of 9/11, the idea of something like an anniversary arises in regard to what has come to be called "Anniversary Editorials" that memorialized 9/11 on its unique first, second, third,.... anniversary. The prediction here, however, was not correct for all five newspapers since *Izvestia* and *Sega* stopped being "predictable" after the third year anniversary. And this is understandable as the terror action happened far away from the territory of both countries – Russia and Bulgaria, and was and is a part of the periphery of their own history.

The extent of destruction characterizing the events of 9/11 suggests that it too can serve to define another condition for changing a *happening* into an *event*. As such, it seems to relate to the earlier criterion of *significance* (consequentiality) that ultimately can be used to define an event. A potentially more positive aspect of some event can also be used to define it. Here, something like the Exodus should be mentioned, particularly in terms of the possibilities of freedom offered by the journey. Other positive examples are provided by

events such as the writing of the Magna Carta, Ghandi's walk to the sea, or the discovery of the New World, to mention only a few.

Bringing these strands together into a single scheme suggests that events can be described in terms of five characteristics: 1) Duration, 2) Specificity, 3) Expectation, 4) Uniqueness, and 5) Breadth of Significance [6]. The first two or three of these characteristics define relatively objective properties of an event; how long did it last, how specific were its beginnings and endings, and how surprising (or expected) were its occurrences. The fourth characteristic concerns the issue of whether an event occurred only once or multiple times. Historical uniqueness either provides the event with greater power because it will never occur again or with lesser power because it is over and will not occur again no matter how constructive or destructive it was. Obviously, the uniqueness of an event contributes to its significance and once detected serves to affect each of the other characteristics. For example, duration now not only deals with the amount of time defining a specific event but also its continuing importance for the future. A similar realignment may take place with respect to the degree of surprise brought about by the event; that is, some event may be quite surprising but of little consequence, only capturing the culture's interest for a short period of time. Similar interactions may take place in regard to all of the remaining characteristics.

As a final bit of information leading to the conclusion that *event* is the proper general term, consider the etymologies of the following four interrelated words: *happening*, *event*, *incident* and *episode*. The word *event* derives from two terms, *e* and *venir*, where *e* means out and *venir* means to come out or to appear. The word *happening* derives from *hap*, meaning luck or chance as in the 14th century phrase "to happen by chance" (implying that happy means a lucky happening). *Incident* has a somewhat more complex etymology and seems to derive from the term *cadere* meaning *to cut* which, when combined with *in*, means to "fall into" as in "to befall." *Episode* also has a somewhat meandering history, deriving from the term *epi* and *eisidos*, meaning *entrance*: hence an episode is something "that comes in from the side, as something unexpected." To complete the picture, consider the adjectives that derive from each term: event becomes eventful, happening becomes happy, and incident becomes incidental and episode becomes episodic.

While each term has its own etymological charm, *event* was chosen as the most useful general term because an eventful event seems more significant than an incidental incident, an episodic episode or a happy happening. The etymology of the word *event* suggests that it involves a perceptual process in which the event is co-constructed by the person in combination with the psychological structure of the event itself. On this basis an event may be thought of as both found and created, which relates it to a more general process of meaning-making defined by the same two processes.

9/11 and the Mass Media

The story of 9/11 was not initially told by print media such as newspapers and magazines but by electronic media such as radio and television. The greater immediacy of these mass media provides the listener with an experience of engaging the event more directly; as providing a sense of "being there". The immediacy associated with electronic media means that the first draft of an event's significance will be provided by direct visual imagery (as on television) and by more indirect but still visually oriented descriptions (as in radio) as by the reflective language characteristic of print media. In addition, print media reach the public more slowly than radio and TV which provide words and images at the speed of sound and/or light. Any attempt to understand the relationship between events and mass

media, therefore, must begin with television (or radio) and then move on to the more reflective analyses offered by newspapers and later by news magazines. In fact, some mass media analysts (Bouvier, 2007) consider the behavior of television newscasters as presenting, in their on- the- air- behavior, a microcosm of the ways in which the listening public reacts to an unfolding event of interest [7].

To situate the ongoing actions of TV reporters dealing with the events of 9/11, Bouvier employs a model of media events developed by Dayan and Katz (1992) [8], later used by Coudrey (2003) [9] and now by Bouvier (2007) [10].

.... most reports on 9/11, and especially live broadcasts, show an acute tension between a sense of directness of the experience of what is being reported (saying it as if you were there), and a constrictedness and delimitation typical of any report that claims to convey meaning (telling you what it means) In the case of 9/11 the negotiation of the tension became paramount for the ways through which 9/11 acquired meaning. (Bouvier, 2007: 51)

The basic difference between "directness" and "constraint" mentioned by Bouvier, grew out of an analysis of how BBC broadcasters covering the events of 9/11 performed their task, thereby providing a unique opportunity to examine the ways in which TV journalism unfolds in the present tense. The tension between directness and constraint seems clearly related to the three major criteria proposed by Dayan and Katz (1992) to define a media event [11]. Of these criteria, some concern the extraordinary nature of 9/11 and its subsequent impact on public policy whereas others concern the nature of the broadcast itself. Specifically, Dayan and Katz define a media event in the following terms:

(1) The event has to break in and be exceptional, and to be recognized as such by the broadcaster and the audience. It must also be seen as transforming the nature of the society directly affected and other societies related to it. As such it has the possibility of evoking a renewal of loyalty to one's country.

(2) The presentation of the event in the media must interrupt everyday broadcasting media and evoke a single-minded preoccupation with the event and its interpretation. The relevant broadcast must attract a larger audience than usual, with most listeners focused almost entirely on this particular broadcast.

(3) The broadcast has to believe in its own narration, which must be highly dramatic and rich in symbolic values. Finally, the broadcast should tend to focus on individual heroic actions.

Dayan and Katz describe two further aspects of a "media event". One of these is called compensation and refers to the attempt by the broadcast to enable the listener to feel present to the event: to compensate, so to speak, for not actually being there. The second concept is called centering, which is meant to capture the fact that the broadcaster is at the "center" of the event – where it is happening – and is simply serving to bridge the gap between the place of the event (its center) and the listener or viewer at home. Although the broadcaster may seem to be a sort of relay, he or she is also naming and, thereby, framing the event for the news of the hour. While some media events may take days to reach a consensus as to their meaning, 9/11 exhibited a different pattern in which an initial consensus defining 9/11 as a terrorist attack was reached within hours after it was first reported. What was most surprising was that this understanding was achieved "online" as broadcasters stayed on the air for more than a single day at a time..

In evaluating the initial broadcasts, Bouvier used the concept of "breaking moments", an idea that also appears in the clichéd newspaper phrase of a "breaking story" or "breaking

news" [12]. This concept obviously depends upon an implicit prior concept, that of flow: if a break is to be perceived, it must be preceded by a continuity of some sort. In the case of public media, the idea of flow is not only provided by the flow of time (or history), but also by the flow of a broadcast narrative. This second type of "flow" captures the way in which history is usually presented thereby making it easy to observe the breaks and dysfluencies characterizing a broadcaster's ongoing narration of the event. In the BBC broadcasts dealing with the events of 9/11 there were at least three significant types of breaks: one involving the opening of the broadcast where the commentator "breaks" the news, a second involving the broadcaster's attempt to produce a rationale or explanation for the event, and a third involving the ongoing reinterpretations of the event which enhances the status of the broadcast as live and, more importantly, as "real". What the third point emphasizes is that broadcasters, no matter how experienced or well-trained, are nonetheless still citizens of some country and that their "flow" and "breaks" often relate to their extra broadcast lives and to their difficulties in knowing how to deal with state of affairs when on the air. Losing professional control while broadcasting, is simply an indication of the power of an event to interrupt not only the flow of the broadcast but of life as well. Under this set of circumstances, broadcasters may be said to lose their objectivity and simply tell the story of an event as a citizen of the United States or Britain.

A similar loss of objectivity seemed to take place on the part of embedded reporters working the second Gulf War. Here, the stated government intention was to provide first-line news reporting from an American perspective comparable to that of Al Jazeera. The journalists – both broadcast and print – received training in battlefield behavior so that they might avoid personal harm and/or harm to the soldiers with whom they served. All journalists were assured that their reports would largely remain as they wrote them (that is, they would not be censored) although the U.S. government did request, and receive, permission to control so called "sensitive" information. Aside from the obvious problem of what "sensitive" means, there is also the problem of whether an embedded journalist would be able to be objective after he or she shared the same hardships as the troops. (In short) does "being embedded".... simply amount to being in bed with the military (Graber, 2003: 34) [13]?"

Returning again to broadcast journalism, there is always the issue of self censorship on the basis of interviews with current broadcast reporters, Mogensen (2007) describes the case of one reporter who deliberately chose not to tell his audience about certain events he had observed but did not deem acceptable for broadcast [14]. One of these concerned not telling his audience that people "were jumping out of the twin Towers" because as he said "I knew there were people who had loved ones in those two buildings...". A second situation he observed but did not report, concerned the behavior of a small number of firemen in a damaged technology store where some of the firefighters reached through the bars and took items off the shelf. The broadcaster chose not report these actions because he "did not think that the public would like to hear that firefighters, who generally behaved heroically, sometimes looted materials from the shops." Although this broadcaster reported feeling deceitful in not talking about the second situation he felt perfectly comfortable in not reporting the first one.

In addition to not reporting everything there was to report, the press sometimes overlooked the way in which some event or action was framed by the administration. Early in their book, *Framing Terrorism*, Norris, Kern, and Jost (2003) point out that the debate concerning the effects of media coverage on terrorist activities raises two questions: "First, does media coverage err on the side of a group of terrorists lending them legitimacy and credibility as well as encouraging future incidents... or ... alternatively, ... (do journalists) ...

err on the side of government's ... position (and thereby) ... reinforce support for political leaders and the policies they implement?" [15]

When a disproportionate emphasis is placed on speed and not on a balanced presentation of some issue, it is possible for a journalist to fall back on ready-made frames of reference that only allow or present one way for an event to be considered. In terms of 9/11, one issue that raised a problem of this type concerned the public's fear of another attack. This relatively high level of fear seems to have had the effect of moving antiterrorist measures to a vital national issue that led the Bush administration to toughen its stance toward Iraq, Iran, and North Korea at the same time as it reopened somewhat more cordial relationships with Pakistan, Russia, and China. Given the powerful influence of news frames in shaping these changes is a parallel need for unbiased news to enable decisions that are well-informed. In the extreme, it might even be suggested that reporters and the public try to do away with frames for a specific news event thereby allowing everyone to reach his or her own conclusions based on the nature of the event.

But is it possible to produce coherent news reports that are without the supportive and directing focus of some frame or other? The answer seems to be that everything we hear, read or think about needs a context to be understood. Given this is the way things are, the question is not "frame or no frame", "good frame or bad frame", but how to deal with socio-personal preconceptions that often congeal into a set of ideas that are capable of constraining the connections and possibilities provoked by the event of interest.

In addition to conflicts between personal values and observations, there is the somewhat more worrisome problem that the mass media may be turning terrorists into celebrities or, even worse, heroes. Such media produced status, according to Brigitte Nacos (2007), was clearly apparent in the case of the Oklahoma bomber Timothy McVeigh and, more to the present point, that of Osama bin Laden [16]. In the McVeigh's case, celebrity status was a result of having his life story told on an MSNBC program entitled "Headliners and Legends." The program served as a stimulus for a certain group of female listeners to send McVeigh photos of themselves, marriage proposals and money, as well as other indications of his having attained celebrity status. In bin Laden's case, Nacos cites research to the effect that in the year 2000, CBS and NBC News broadcast more stories about bin Laden than about British Prime Minister Blair or German Chancellor Schroeder.

Viewing these results as a warning signal, it is possible to conclude that mass media exposure can make someone into a celebrity, suggesting the media not only rewards ordinary social values but may also reward actions and values contrary to the mores of the society. As *Izvestia* noted in one of its editorials, the mass media always has the possibility of promoting inconsequential people and events. While all media may value objectivity, the nature of reality combined with different human perspectives on that reality, may make objectivity problematic. If mass media are designed to mediate between reality and its description, then they will have to learn to live with complete uncertainty and will have to accept that reality will continue to escape human understanding. To which it is only reasonable to suggest that to get the best picture of what is happening will require an educated consumer of news reporting and editorial writing, to read a wide variety of sources representing many different ways of dealing with the complex and multileveled sociopolitical and historical world in which we live.

Epilogue

In some ways, the anniversary editorials provide support for ideas initially grasped in different contexts; in other ways they offers new insights into old problems, whereas in still other ways they carry forward the narrative of the West's encounter with terrorism in the person of Osama bin Laden and his followers [17]. In the first case, that of providing additional support for things already known is the use of output curves to define an event's boundaries or in the finding that real-world political metaphors are often composed of personifications and reifications.

In the second case, there are new insights that emerged from analyzing anniversary editorials. Most important of these is the observation that significant public events can be memorialized in terms of two different types of temporal flow: for monuments devoted to glorifying the nation state, time seems to require a linear trajectory extending to future accomplishments. In the case of more meditative memorials, time requires a slower trajectory so as to allow for the emergence of profound feelings associated with honoring the dead but not the process of war. Within the context of written materials the original insight can be transferred to editorials in the distinction between reflective and prescriptive editorials that appeared immediately after the 9/11 attack but not during the period of the anniversary editorials.

In the third case, analysis of the anniversary editorials led to the possibility of describing the narrative process of reactions to 9/11 in terms of changing contexts as well as of possible changes in the focal event. Other ideas deriving from the present analysis of anniversary editorials include the observation of a change in editorial focus from one initially concerned with emotional consequences of the attack to one now concerned with more intellectual matters of law and morality. Perhaps this progression describes a frequent pattern in editorials dealing with an ongoing set of problems.

Similar to information uncovered on the basis of an in-depth evaluation of earlier editorials, the analysis of anniversary editorials yielded information capable of teaching America and the world about historical events such as 9/11 as well as about the role of historical references and metaphoric diction in bringing about the narrative of some historical event.

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