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## **Myth, metaphor, and meaning: The Los Angeles Times' reportage of the 1991 Persian Gulf War**

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MYTH, METAPHOR, AND MEANING:  
THE LOS ANGELES TIMES' REPORTAGE OF  
THE 1991 PERSIAN GULF WAR

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A Thesis  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts  
in  
English Composition

---

by  
Doris Anita Anderson

March 1995

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Doris Anita Anderson  
March 1995

Approved by:

  
Kellie Rayburn, Chair, English

3/15/95  
Date

  
Bruce Golden, Ph.D., English

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## ABSTRACT

This study of Los Angeles Times reportage of the 1991 Persian Gulf War considers how written news affects readers. Theories of how language develops different connotation, how metaphor affects understanding, and how cultural myth affects writers' and readers' approaches to events all apply. Roland Barthes' theory of how cultural myth is formed and affects understanding of the world is examined and applied to Times reportage. The impact of metaphor on the way readers perceive events, particularly pertaining to war, is examined as explained in the work of George Lakoff, Mark Turner, and Mark Johnson. Metaphors prevalent in Times reportage have been identified and found to relate directly to the basic survival needs, life furthering needs, and social needs of all people. The concern of linguist and media critic Noam Chomsky, that the press is a tool of political power groups, is considered.

Certain mythically determined positions on the war held by Americans and allies, the Iraqis, and other Arabs are illustrated and explained. Their similarities are noted.

Times reportage emerges as writing that cannot help but reflect prevailing cultural myths. Metaphorical concepts employed in the reportage give discerning readers clues about the approaches and sources of the writers. Times readers must assume responsibility for applying information in reportage to their own personal mythologies, thus forming new meanings.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks to Kellie Rayburn for believing in the idea for this project, to Bruce Golden for his thoughtful criticism, and to my long-suffering husband, Don, who filled in the gaps on the home front while I hunched over my desk.

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#### AUTHOR'S NOTE

Since many writers are represented numerous times in several different articles, sometimes two or three in the same day's issue of the Times, in order to correctly identify from which article information has been taken for attribution, I have increased the information in the attributing parentheses to include, in addition to the author's last name and page number, the first one or two words of the title of the article as such: (Healy, "Bush Orders. . ." A5).

In chapters 2 and 3 where specific figurative language is the subject of discussion, the examples will be set off in **bold type** to aid the reader.

## Introduction

The "mother of all battles" was Saddam Hussein's description and metaphoric warning of what enemies of Iraq would encounter if they tried to free Kuwait. This expression, along with many others from both sides of the Persian Gulf War of 1991, depicts the various factions' attitudes toward the conflict. Because scholars often differ about how ideas and beliefs are expressed in language, these differing approaches raise questions concerning how we regard and respond to what we read in the newspaper. As the press chronicles the day's events, do written ideas and beliefs shape readers' attitudes and beliefs or do they simply reflect the attitudes and beliefs of the readers? Or do they do a little of both? And whatever the effect of this reportage, should it be a matter of concern to society at large?

Readers commonly complain that the press is biased, but often the only evidence to support this criticism is that readers believe the press supports a viewpoint different from theirs. While in the United States, freedom of the press is a fundamental right, Americans still expect reportage to be fair, honest, and responsible while also echoing their own beliefs. So where do these complaints originate?

Several linguists offer theories on the power of

language that provide explanations about how thoughts are shaped, how those thoughts are expressed in language, how that language is used in reportage, and how that reportage may influence the attitudes of readers.

Roland Barthes offers his theory of myth to explain our cultural attitudes and beliefs about the world. Barthes argues convincingly that culturally determined myths saturate media, both visual and verbal, thus his theories can be applied to news reportage. If his theories are accurate, in a multicultural society such as ours, instead of a newspaper being able to report only fair and accurate "facts," it also reports "myths." These "myths" originate in the various reporters' mythically chosen language and syntax as well as in the readers' cultural responses to that language and syntax. Barthes' approach illuminates how and why reportage seems biased to some readers. Other writers also offer arguments to explain the impossibility of total objectivity in reportage. Tom Koch, journalist, speaks of The News as Myth, while Jerrol B. Manheim and Peter C. Sederberg, political scientists, describe the power of language to influence people politically.

Since language has such power to influence people's beliefs and actions, what evidence of the cultural belief systems embodied in these myths can be identified and explained? Rhetoricians and linguists George Lakoff, Mark Johnson, and Mark Turner stress the prevalence of metaphors

in our language. These metaphors, they explain, are so embedded in our language that we often are unaware of their presence or impact; yet, they argue, our thinking would be severely limited without their use. For instance, "life is a journey" suggests that we move from a starting place to an ending place on "the road of life." When we have become successful, we "have arrived" and when things go bad, we "take a wrong turn" or "get off the track." This metaphorical journey was used and understood in reportage of the Persian Gulf War as reporters described the allies' progress in driving Hussein's troops out of Kuwait. But Lakoff, Johnson, and Turner argue that our common cultural metaphors shape our thinking rather than just reflect our thinking. If they are correct, then our metaphor of "life is a journey," which suggests a beginning, forward movement, and a finality at the end, would contrast with another culture's metaphor that "life is a circle," which suggests continuity in a never-ending cycle where death might be perceived as less final. Lakoff, Johnson, and Turner's ideas of metaphor and their impact on how we think and believe can be important in analyzing news reportage; for if writers' use of specific metaphors and other figures of speech may shape our thinking, we as readers need to be conscious of that power and read with more critical awareness.

Noam Chomsky, a noted linguist and political

commentator, skips the potential impact of our cultural mythology and metaphors as they may be expressed in general language. He directly names the press for being a puppet of manipulative political forces. He complains that although the press likes to think its reporting is objective, often it deliberately promotes its own political message. In his book Language and Politics, he insists reportage in the Los Angeles Times is equivalent to Orwell's Newspeak, because he believes the reporters and the public had reached such a deep level of indoctrination regarding America's involvement in Vietnam and Nicaragua, that they were not even aware they were being fed propaganda (726-727). Barthes' theory of myth could explain that Chomsky's complaints are largely Chomsky's own mythical opinion. However, a closer look at Chomsky's claims may reveal the basis for his reasoning.

A study which examines written news in the light of the three approaches (Barthes' theory of myth; Lakoff, Johnson, and Turner's explanation of the power of metaphor; and Chomsky's argument that the press is biased by political indoctrination) is important if we acknowledge that newspapers have the power to educate, inform, and influence the attitudes of the public. Furthermore, because newspapers comprise a daily history of events, past issues become an archival reference and a primary source for researchers on any number of social, political, scientific, or historic subjects. A thorough understanding of how newswriting

produces meaning should illuminate any bias in reportage as well as enable readers to obtain a greater understanding of the levels of meaning in newswriting.

The Persian Gulf War of 1991 is a major, short-term event which received comprehensive reportage in the Los Angeles Times. Not only does the newswriting of the events of the war represent the thinking of divergent cultural myths, but the language reveals distinguishable patterns of metaphor.

In the winter of 1990-91, much of the public was apprehensive about another major military conflict after the tragic results of Vietnam. Pro-military factions were suspicious of the press, for they believed that the Vietnam War was lost because the press' criticism of U.S. involvement, graphic and bloody battlefield photographs, and coverage of anti-war activities at home, demoralized American troops while it encouraged the North Vietnamese to believe that most of the American public was against the war. As a result, in the Persian Gulf War, the press was not allowed free access to troops or battle zones, and all reportage not gathered during official press briefings was subject to military censorship. But other factors of war had changed as well: a United Nations sanctioned coalition of 28 nations under the leadership of the United States was authorized to carry out measures against Iraqi forces to remove them from Kuwait. Also, technology had dramatically changed the types of

weapons used by the allies, and the U.S. military personnel were now all volunteers. Finally, based on what readers knew from the media, as more and more news was presented, the enemy, Saddam Hussein, and his reasons for the war as well as his reported brutal behavior, made it nearly impossible for American readers to excuse his actions. All of these factors changed the climate of war reporting from the conditions of Vietnam, where reporters were allowed in the field with the troops. Support among citizens in the United States had declined as the war stretched out over ten years. American casualties mounted while the military was limited to the role of support for the South Vietnamese rather than allowed to use all its weapons and strength. While in the Gulf War we may note these new conditions which might affect ease of information gathering for reporters, we will deal with what was printed. We will find through a study of the language of this news reportage that differences in cultural beliefs, or myths, led to the ultimate conflict of war as well as to certain elements in reporting the war.

Chapter 1 of this thesis will examine the idea of cultural myth as explained by Roland Barthes and see how George Lakoff, Mark Johnson, and Mark Turner explain and justify the power of metaphorical concepts in our language. It will study the opinions of Noam Chomsky and see how he argues that newspapers serve as propaganda for the power structure. Chapter 2 will identify the patterns of

metaphorical language common in the reportage and consider its likely effect on readers. Chapter 3 will discuss how myths of the American government, the American military, the American people, and their European allies are expressed in the Times. In addition, Chapter 3 will contrast those beliefs with the Iraqi position as well as those of other Arabs both in support of and against Hussein.

Finally, this thesis will analyze how cultural myth and figurative language are used in the Los Angeles Times' reportage of the Persian Gulf War of 1991 and will consider how this reportage is likely to affect readers.

## Chapter 1

### Three Critical Approaches as Foundations for Examining News Reportage

Most readers of the daily paper probably assume that the stories they read will inform them about such events as plane crashes, weather reports, sports events, and government actions. Because the newspaper labels these as news, most readers will consciously read these stories expecting to learn unvarnished facts. But what appear to be plain news stories may not be so plain. A reader may feel that a particular reporter did not treat a subject fairly. When people read the daily newspaper, a way of connecting with others, they want to read writing that both informs them of daily events, and by its approach to the subject, supports what they believe. When what they read subverts their basic value system, they are likely to complain that the newspaper is biased politically--too far to the right or too far to the left. Just as there are millions of people in the United States representing many cultural backgrounds, no single newspaper, no matter what its positions on important issues, can please everyone. Yet the daily newspaper is still an important source of information, and the responsibility entrusted to news writers is great, for the printed word can become both a political tool that may influence thinking and an historical record of what is

happening. This raises the question, is it possible or necessary for reportage to be completely objective, devoid of myth or metaphor?

Two problems arise in writing that tries to be absolutely objective. First, newswriting cannot help but be reductive. In a battle report, for instance, every soldier's thoughts, fears, and actions cannot be reported. Every explosion, accident, failure, success, and performance of each piece of equipment cannot be cataloged. A whole library could not contain a thorough written report of all that happens in any one day. So newswriting has, of necessity, evolved its own code to make a massive situation manageable. The who, what, why, when, where, and how of an event are identified to give the reader an essential picture of what went on, and the narrative requires that the most important facts be presented first, and those details deemed less important appear in order of declining importance. This is important. It is someone's subjective decision. Consequently, much information that may be of interest to some readers will be left out. By following the code, and by being a reductive narrative, a news story may omit the larger context of an event. Yet, to a mother whose son might be involved in a battle, the who, what, why, when, and where of the big picture is not nearly as important as how her son has fared. She would want to see a different set of w's according to her perspectives. She might question the very

need for the battle at all, and then the use of particular strategies, equipment, and manpower to carry it out. These concerns of hers would all revolve around the personal attachment she has to her son. But to the general directing the battle, her son is anonymous, an expendable resource, a means to help achieve a larger goal. Here, we have a hint of the difficulty for newspapers to satisfy, educate, or even appease all their readers by the content and approach of their story selection.

Second, and even more significant than the reductive nature and codes of writing required in news stories, are the commonly held beliefs of any culture, or, according to Roland Barthes, the myths, which we will examine in the next section.

\* \* \*

#### Roland Barthes' Theory of Myth

Myths shape the way news is reported to fit the culture. Barthes asserts "that myth is a system of communication, that is a message" (Barthes Reader 93). He explains how myth develops

. . . it is human history which converts reality into speech, and it alone rules the life and the death of mythical language. Ancient or not, mythology can only have a historical foundation, for myth is a type of speech chosen by history:

it cannot possibly evolve from the 'nature' of things.

Speech of this kind is a message. It is therefore by no means confined to oral speech. It can consist of modes of writing or of representations. . . . (Barthes Reader 94).

Barthes, then, believes that our culture's mythology grows out of our history, and this mythology may be seen in many forms of expression, including language. Barthes' discussion of semiology refines his argument. He says

. . . any semiology postulates a relation between two terms, a signifier and a signified. This relation concerns objects which belong to different categories, and this is why it is not one of equality but one of equivalence. We must here be on our guard, for despite common parlance which simply says that the signifier expresses the signified, we are dealing, in any semiological system, not with two, but with three different terms. For what we grasp is not at all one term after the other but the correlation which unites them: there are therefore, the signifier, the signified, and the sign, which is the associative total of the first two terms (Barthes Reader 97).

He illustrates his argument by telling how he associates

roses with passion. The roses themselves, devoid of any meaning, are the signifier. The passion he somehow historically associates with roses becomes the signified, and by adding the two together, he arrives at the sign (Barthes Reader 97, 98). To him, roses carry the extra overlay of meaning of passion, and when roses and passion are combined, he has "passionified" roses, a meaning perhaps quite different from someone else whose own history overlaid roses with their sad use on a funeral wreath.

Now if we lay a string of these signs in a phrase or clause, we have a syntagm, each word of which can be absolutely packed with different meanings to different people, depending on their own personal histories. If we then multiply these syntagms into a complete narrative, we can see that there can be endless possibilities for interpretations by readers, perhaps even as many interpretations as there are readers. These separate interpretations of written work are sometimes called the "reading" of a piece.

A newswriter, then, is faced with a dilemma if he or she hopes to write objective facts that will satisfy all readers; for there really is no absolute, objective truth. As Barthes says, no two humans ever can share histories identical in every way. Their choice of language will reflect their own histories. Although the differences in this language choice may seem trivial, it is possible that

the subtle connotative effect of differences between particular words over a period of time could affect the beliefs of readers. Critics who identify bias in a major paper such as the Los Angeles Times must assume the responsibility to consider and evaluate perspectives which come from the myths consciously or unconsciously expressed by the writers. These become apparent through the writers' choice of words with their subjective connotations, the writers' choice of what data to accentuate by their placement and amount of attention in a story, who is quoted, and which specific comments of the interviewee are used. Seeking "perfection" in expression must be given up by both readers and writers, for no two people can agree on even a definition of perfection. However, both readers and writers must understand that writers should try to tell the "truth" as best as they can. Each culture or society has different histories, hence differing ideals and beliefs. Barthes calls these ideals and beliefs myths, which seem so natural to a society or culture that they become a form of "common sense" describing how things are. Barthes further explains that a society's myth is what is so well understood that it "goes without saying," or it is just known and doesn't need verbal explanation (Rustle of Language 65).

Any major newspaper which strays too far from expressing its readers' cultural myths will lose readers' confidence or narrow its audience only to those who feel

comfortable with the paper's position. A society or culture's myth system may or may not be compatible with another culture's. A newspaper such as the Times with its multicultural readership faces the dilemma of trying to satisfy many beliefs, yet still keep a wide circulation and advertising base so that it can remain financially solvent. A newspaper must cover news as comprehensively as it can, then leave individuals to decide for themselves how the news will affect them. Yet all of us need a myth-system to hold our ideas together. If we follow Barthes' argument, we must conclude that both newswriters and their readers will gravitate toward those myth-systems that are closest to their own histories, for it is those that will seem most natural to them.

Barthes amplifies how myth is actually manifested throughout modern societies

Myth. . . can be read in anonymous statements of the press, advertising, mass consumption; it is a social determinate, a reflection. . . myth consists in turning culture into nature, or at least turning the social, the cultural, the ideological, the historical into the 'natural:' what is merely a product of class division and its moral, cultural, aesthetic consequences is presented (stated) as a natural consequence; the quite contingent grounds of the statement

become, under the effect of mythic conversion,  
Common Sense, Right Reason, the Norm, Public  
Opinion. . . (Rustle of Language 65).

Barthes' conception is presented so as to assume that society embodies a prevailing myth. He explains how writers may be affected by their own cultural myths

Within any literary form there is a general choice of tone, of ethos if you like, and this is precisely where the writer shows himself clearly as an individual because this is where he commits himself. A language and style are data prior to all problematics of language, they are the natural product of Time and of the person as a biological entity; but the formal identity of the writer is truly established only outside the permanence of grammatical norms and stylistic constants where the written continuum, first collected and enclosed within a perfectly innocent linguistic nature, at last becomes a total sign, the choice of a human attitude, the affirmation of a certain Good (Writing Degree Zero 13-14).

Barthes is not alone in his explanation of significance and influence of cultural myths. Some agree nearly completely with his assertions, while others add their own interpretations. Kenneth Burke's position is nearly

identical with Barthes', although he calls "motivation" what Barthes calls "history." Burke says, ". . . each man's motivation is unique, since his situation is unique, which is particularly obvious when you recall that his situation also reflects the unique sequence of his past" (103). A person's motivation then, will be driven by his or her experiences which make up each person's history.

Peter Sederberg amplifies mythological ideas of a culture and calls them "shared meaning." Then he claims that all our ". . . outpourings, whether physical (e.g., tools and other cultural artifacts) or behavioral (e.g., language, organizations, etc.), attain a reality that confronts us as external to and independent of ourselves. This external 'reality' turns back upon us and shapes our responses" (4). Sederberg has gone beyond simply describing our shared meanings to asserting that these shared meanings influence our thinking. His theory raises a question. If shared meanings can influence our thinking, can they also be distorted, made into what we want to believe by the way they are written or the "reading" we give them?

Claiming that as we try to make sense of things, we create myth, Henry Tudor says

A myth, I suggest is an interpretation of what the myth-maker (rightly or wrongly) takes to be hard fact. It is a device men adopt in

order to come to grips with reality; and we can tell that a given account is a myth, not by the amount of truth it contains, but by the fact that it is believed to be true. . . (17).

He later amplifies his idea to include history. ". . . much that passes for history is properly speaking myth or is shot through with mythical ways of thought. . ." (123).

Tudor, however, does not indicate how he or anyone else could know how much truth an account contains, because each individual's truth is his or her own, and who is to be the judge of what truth is except by a potentially faulty measure against Barthes' "Common Sense"? Thus, the press faces its dilemma--whose "truth" should they express? Fred Siebert directs his remarks directly at how the press reflects the society about which it writes: ". . . the press always takes on the form and coloration of the social and political structures within which it operates. Especially, it reflects the system of social control whereby the relations of individuals and institutions are adjusted" (1). We shall see if this rather cynical attitude toward the press is borne out in the war reportage of the Times.

Newspaper writers themselves, during the explosion of knowledge in this last half century, have carried on a continuous dialectic concerning the approaches newspapers should assume, accepting for themselves the fact that their writings carry some influence and that they are charged with

the responsibility of wielding that power wisely. Although they may not identify myths as they have been discussed so far in this paper, they forever face the problem of choosing whose myth to report. Herbert J. Altschull describes the difficulty

It is, of course, always to be kept in mind that journalism does not exist in a vacuum, apart from the world of human experience and the society in which the journalist lives. Reporters and editors are part, often a significant part, of their political, economic, aesthetic, and cultural environment. The practice of journalism never has been and cannot ever be separated from the values present in the cultural tradition of America. . . The press is granted liberty but is then confronted by the logic of license. People swear that they should be guided by the reason of their minds, but find that they remain pulled by the emotions in their hearts. They swell with unquestioning patriotism in defending their national interests--and then are drawn to a yearning for international brotherhood. The dualisms of big and small, of urban and rural, of belief in freedom and

trust in authority, all play their parts  
(4-5).

A respected journalist, James Reston, narrows the problem down even more as he considers reportage of government affairs including our nation's military conflicts. He acknowledges the dilemma caused by reporters' loyalty to country. Patriotism, definitely a cultural belief or myth, is at stake

American reporters worry about this dilemma between their obligation to the truth and their obligation to their country much more than is generally realized. They know that they often embarrass officials by reporting the facts, and even interfere with public policy occasionally, but they go on doing it because, somehow, the tradition of reporting the facts, no matter how much they hurt, is stronger than any other (ix).

When Reston discusses "truth" here, he is likely using the term synonymously with cold facts, bare of the larger context of an event, for he adds later, "The conflict between the men who make and the men who report the news is as old as time. News may be true, but it is not truth, and reporters and officials seldom see it the same way" (3). Without directly identifying Barthes' mythical differences, Reston shows an awareness of the idea. And he offers a

thoughtful way for the press to handle the multi-sided issues of national concern, including warfare. He says

The problem is to present the great issues as a series of practical choices: let the people look at the alternatives as the President has to look at them and try at the end to decide among the hard and dangerous courses (87).

This suggestion is idealistic, and it is probably impossible for a paper to keep up with the reporting that would be required to keep the readers informed of all the problems facing the President. It would also be impractical in that many Presidential decisions must be made quickly, not allowing time for public input, but it would allow for more informed evaluation of the decisions made. Reston's suggestion has exposed his recognition of the reductive nature of news.

It is evident that the forces behind how news is written and presented are complex. While the simple, formulaic code of the inverted pyramid organization of facts from most important to least important and the reliance on the who, what, why, when, where, and how of a situation sound at the surface to be safe, factual, and objective, we can see that objectivity is impossible. If we think we know that an editorial opinion is just that, an opinion, and that the readers are free to accept it or not, the premise

that readers will make a critical judgment of the worth of the opinion also is not that simple. For if we accept Barthes' theory of myth and acknowledge that words and phrases don't mean exactly the same thing to any two of us because none of us has identical histories, and that whatever groups we fall into are groups because of some broad historical similarities, then we may hope to read news writing that generally supports our beliefs. Additionally, we will apply our own "reading" or interpretation to the newswriting. If we also consider that any news writing that must follow a code is automatically reductive, limited writing, at this point there is no choice but to consciously reject the myth that newswriting can be objective.

We have looked broadly at the backgrounds writers and readers bring with them to reports of events. The next step will be to examine the whole idea of prevalent metaphors and see how they may reflect, affect, and effect cultural myths as used in the Times' reportage of the Persian Gulf War of 1991.

\* \* \*

#### Metaphoric Expression and How It Affects Newswriting

While Barthes explained for us that "every message is the encounter of a level of expression (or signifier) and a level of content (the signified)" (Semiotic Challenge 73),

we now move on to more complex syntagms, chains of words. These syntagms often contain metaphoric concepts which add another layer of meaning when we use them to explain our original idea. Lakoff and Johnson explain: "The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (4); and Lakoff and Turner amplify the importance of that simple concept by arguing that we would be severely limited in our ability to communicate without metaphor, for they enable us to form thoughts

. . . metaphor is an integral part of our everyday thought and language. And it is irreplaceable: metaphor allows us to understand our selves and our world in ways no other modes of thought can.

Far from being merely a matter of words, metaphor is a matter of thought--all kinds of thought: thought about emotion, about society, about human character, about language, and about the nature of life and death. It is indispensable not only to our imagination but also to our reason (xi).

Lakoff and Turner's powerful idea suffuses all written expression.

While we expect metaphors in literary works to display new insights into human conditions, and we expect metaphors in advertising and political campaign rhetoric to try to

gain our confidence, we must admit that metaphors also suffuse writing we would like to trust, such as newswriting, and that they have the power to influence us. As readers, we have the responsibility to understand the nature of metaphor. Lakoff and Johnson add, "The most fundamental values in a culture will be coherent with the metaphorical structure of the most fundamental concepts in the culture" (22).

Of particular concern to people interested in the persuasive power of newswriting is whether readers are aware of the power of metaphor to affect their understanding. Lakoff and Turner believe that some metaphors are so embedded in our understanding that we are unaware of their use

They are systematic in that there is a fixed correspondence between the structure of the domain to be understood (e.g., death) and the structure of the domain in terms of which we are understanding it (e.g., departure). We usually understand them in terms of common experiences. They are largely unconscious, though attention may be drawn to them. Their operation in cognition is mostly automatic. And they are widely conventionalized in language, that is, there are a great number of words and idiomatic expressions in our language

whose interpretations depend upon those  
conceptual metaphors (51).

Here, the authors have gone beyond meaning in single  
expressions to include entire metaphorical concepts.  
Sederberg enlarges on how powerfully these concepts may  
affect how we see reality

Many of these metaphorical constructions  
of reality are so deeply embedded in our  
thought processes we fail to recognize  
them for what they are and thus miss what  
they obscure as well. The choice we face  
in thinking about the world is often  
between metaphors rather than between  
metaphor and the direct representation  
of reality (153).

It follows then that if reality becomes blurred by  
metaphorical concepts, we may be led to take actions that  
may not be understood by people who see the world from a  
different metaphorical approach. Differing metaphorical  
approaches are language-based portions of what makes up  
each culture's myth. This would concur with Barthes'  
explanation of what is "signified." Lakoff and Turner  
identify many prominent and common metaphorical concepts so  
embedded in our language that they become what Barthes calls  
"natural," what we don't consciously think about, or what  
"goes without saying."

Lakoff and Turner divide these metaphorical concepts into three types: the experiential are ". . . metaphors that are imaginative and creative. . . are capable of giving us a new understanding of our experience. Thus, they can give new meaning to our pasts, to our daily activity, and to what we know and believe" (139). Without these, we would be severely limited. "Merely viewing a non-physical thing as an entity or substance does not allow us to comprehend very much about it" (Lakoff and Johnson 27). For example, a person who has never experienced war would have difficulty conceptualizing its horrors until, perhaps, it is explained by a metaphor such as "the blood swollen god" (from Stephen Crane's The Red Badge of Courage) where readers could visualize a monster gorging itself on the blood of its victims.

The orientational metaphors provide a spatial comprehension, such as "good is up" as in "Things are looking up." Lakoff and Johnson add, "Individuals, like groups, vary in their priorities and in the ways they define what is good or virtuous to them. . . Relative to what is important for them, their individual value systems are coherent with the major orientational metaphors of the mainstream culture" (24). These orientational metaphors can be found prominently in the Times' reportage of how flag-waving and yellow ribbon displaying indicated what position people took in relation to the war.

But the most powerful metaphors that may actually shape behavior, Lakoff and Johnson define as structural metaphors

Structural metaphors allow us to do much more than just orient concepts, refer to them, quantify them, etc., as we do with simple orientational and ontological metaphors; they allow us, in addition, to use one highly structured and clearly delineated concept to structure another (61).

For example, they say, "To give some idea of what it could mean for a concept to structure an everyday activity, let us start with the concept ARGUMENT IS WAR. This metaphor is reflected in our everyday language by a wide variety of expressions" (5). Some examples they give to illustrate how this metaphor is so commonly used are, "I've never won an argument with him," and "I demolished his argument" (5).

We can apply the "argument is war" metaphor to dialectical argument which appears in newswriting in obvious opinion pieces such as editorials. Lakoff and Johnson explain, "The only permissible tactics in this RATIONAL ARGUMENT are supposedly the stating of premises, the citing of supporting evidence and the drawing of logical conclusions" (63). That writers believe they have rational arguments to write about underlines Barthes' explanation of how our shared experiences make up our cultural myths. These shared cultural myths make up the foundation for rational argument, and even rational argument can lay a foundation

for cultural conflicts. Lakoff and Johnson show how metaphorical concepts help frame cultural myths

Imagine a culture where an argument is viewed as a dance, the participants are seen as performers, and the goal is to perform in a balanced and aesthetically pleasing way. In such a culture people would view argument [sic] differently, carry them out differently, and talk about them differently. But we would probably not view them as arguing at all: they would simply be doing something different (5).

Now while that idea of seeing things differently makes sense, it seems the major cultures of the world do not subscribe to such a peaceful approach. Kenneth Burke, while not specifically identifying metaphors, but calling concepts "idioms," actually expresses a parallel approach to the metaphor, argument is war. He writes

In any event, the world as we know it, the world in history, cannot be described in its particularities by an idiom of peace. Though we may ideally, convert the dialectic into a chart of the dialectic (replacing a development by a calculus), we are actually in a world at war--a world at combat--and even a calculus must be

developed with the dialectics of participation by 'the enemy'--hence the representative anecdote must contain militaristic ingredients. It may not be an anecdote of peace--but it may be an anecdote giving us the purification of war (337).

If our cultures are shaped by mythical conceptual systems, and if we also have adopted a conceptual system that pits different cultural beliefs against one another that predispose toward conflicts, and if argument is a type of war, then it is no wonder that so many conflicts arise in the pluralistic American society, let alone the vastly varied cultures of the world.

In addition, Lakoff and Johnson argue that metaphors possess the power to move us to action

Metaphors may create realities for us, especially social realities. A metaphor may thus be a guide for future action. Such actions will, of course, fit the metaphor. This will, in turn, reinforce the power of the metaphor to make experience coherent. In this sense metaphors can be self-fulfilling prophecies (156).

That this idea should be taken seriously today is seen

easily by most Americans who are well aware of the power of advertising, and how it moves us to consider and possibly change our personal appearance, diet, recreation, habits, and environment, even though most of us may deny that it was advertising that moved us to change. If we take these same metaphors that express our cultural beliefs and apply them to news reporting, which most of us do consider seriously, we can see the vast potential for power. Metaphorical concepts can form a framework for news writing, and writers may express cultural myths, even as a reporter thinks what he or she reports are facts. When we add the reader's own response to the written reportage, we can see how, even though newswriting is carefully crafted with fairness and honesty, the possibility exists for distorted representation of events.

Sederberg identifies another problem with using language that can alter the writer's intended message. He argues that if we wish to change one meaning in a commonly held belief conveyed by metaphors, we can alter it only if we have another meaning to take its place

Our lives take shape under the impact of a web of associations and meanings which are not necessarily of our making or choosing. Such ties cannot be transcended through a simple act of will; the meanings we reject continue to inform our responses, if only because

we react against them. Moreover, even if we manage to loosen the grip of a particular meaning, we do so only by embracing another. There is no metasemantic ground on which we may stand; to respond differently is still to respond. . . (5).

The newspaper, then, may have the power to provide new metaphoric concepts. If reportage imposes its own metaphorical concepts on a society instead of trying to represent the existing concepts of a society, then it may have usurped power. Lakoff and Johnson equate those who make the metaphors with those who have the power. "In a culture where the myth of objectivism is very much alive and truth is always absolute truth, the people who get to impose their metaphors on the culture get to define what we consider to be true--absolutely and objectively true" (160). This statement suggests that newswriters are among those in prominent positions who have the opportunity "to impose their metaphors on the culture" (160). We may then ask if newswriters understand the boundaries of what is fair in their reportage? Do they understand their power, and do they knowingly manipulate language to use that power? Two sources would suggest that, industry-wide, the press is quite concerned with government censorship affecting "freedom of the press." The press makes no conscious effort to present any cultural mythology, but limits itself, at least in its

own definition of its responsibility, to being accurate, which means reporting only substantiated facts. Robert M. Hutchins' 1947 publication, A Free and Responsible Press, resulting from a major meeting of journalists, became a seminal report on the role of the press in this century. It identifies both the threat to freedom of the press and the need to tell the truth, but it also recognizes that in our rapidly changing society, the press must assume some responsibility for educating the public. But the Commission's report falls short of proposing a code of ethics that touches on the powerful concepts behind the language reporters may use. In fact, some thirty-three years later, Brian Brooks, et al, are still recognizing the lack of generally acknowledged standards. Brooks says, "Without an industry-wide code of conduct, we must pick our way through the maze of ethical and unethical practices to distinguish the good from the bad" (445).

In spite of this lack of a clear-cut code of ethics or conduct in reporting, evidence of what the press thinks should constitute quality work can be found in reporters' own guidebooks. "We should all attempt to bring quality writing, wit, and knowledge to our work. If we succeed, newspapers will be not only informative, but also enjoyable; not only educational, but also entertaining; and not only bought, but read" (Brooks 251). Brooks has left out objectivity as a standard in favor of readability. Nowhere did either of these sources

indicate they recognized the importance of the metaphoric and mythical effect of their reportage.

However, J. Herbert Altschull in his book, From Milton to McLuhan: The Ideas Behind American Journalism, philosophically argues with the journalistic definitions of what newswriting is

Journalists rarely if ever present bare facts, almost never in the exact order in which they took place. What purports to be reality in the newspapers and on radio and television is inevitably a reconstruction of reality, to fit the needs and requirements of journalism. . . . Journalists who seek to make their stories interesting by pulling out for the lead the most dramatic aspect of an event are inevitably distorting reality, for reality is always neutral. Reconstruction and reorganization of events into the forms of journalism are aesthetic pursuits, retelling of happenings in the style of literature (23).

Altschull goes so far as to suggest that figurative language in a news story distorts reality. But the question remains, whose reality?

The journalistic 'story' is inevitably a mixture of fact and fiction and hence unreal . . . . The professional ideology of American

journalists holds that what appears in the news media represents the truth or is at least 'accurate' in the sense of being real. Yet figurative speech is not real. It substitutes stylistic structure for reality (24).

In spite of these apparent flaws impeding objectivity in reporting, given that no two humans or cultures are identical, readers who criticize newswriting should be aware of the forces behind that writing, then expect to evaluate that reportage knowing its potential flaws. Readers should not expect to find their own cultural myths always regurgitated back to them by the press. A good chance exists that portions of any group's favorite beliefs could be flawed and possibly destructive to society's improvement for everyone, as in reportage which reinforces ethnic prejudice. Furthermore, intellectual growth hinges on exposure to new ways of understanding. Perpetual reinforcement of the same belief system without any tests of its value would hinder a culture's growth. Readers may grow intellectually if what they read occasionally helps them reevaluate their beliefs.

It is clear that myths and metaphors help convey our cultural understanding of the world. Yet deciding which metaphors should express whose myth poses endless problems which impede objective reporting and objective reader interpretation.

Next, we will address another problem in interpretation of the news.

\* \* \*

#### Noam Chomsky and the Message Behind the Meaning

We have identified common myths about the press itself. The first is that it is an objective record of daily history, that it simply mirrors the day's events. The second is exactly the opposite, that the press is biased. It is liberal if you are conservative politically, and right-wing if you are liberal. But there is no completely satisfactory description of how the press is or even should be. Critics of the press find cause for concern because of what they perceive to be the biases in reportage, for these biases carry messages that may move people to behave in ways the critics deem inappropriate. We have seen that myth and metaphor may affect how writers approach their subjects. We have seen what may influence readers in how they interpret a reporter's words. The power of cultural myths and the way writers perceive and explain these beliefs through metaphoric concepts preclude the possibility of the press being able to express absolute truth.

Differing perspectives on how the press handles this dilemma and how the situation can be improved are offered by several critics. One of the most prominent is Noam Chomsky. He has little good to say about news organizations, for he

asserts that they serve as conduits for elite organizations to indoctrinate the public. He suggests that much news of political affairs falls into the category of propaganda.

In Language and Politics, Chomsky responds to an interviewer's question about the objectivity of the press

Q. Do news organizations lend themselves to any sort of systematic analysis or do individual idiosyncrasies and judgments varying from operation to operation prevent any sort of general logic?

A. . . . when you move to issues of more fundamental concern, to what is real power in the country--questions of foreign policy, questions of national military policy and so on, or general questions of national economic policy, policies that really affect people with real power--, in that case one finds that the pressure of the system of indoctrination, of the party line, becomes very heavy, and there are very few people who deviate from it or who even perceive it. They think they're being quite objective, but you can easily demonstrate that they're operating within a framework of shared assumptions that is very far from obvious

and often very far from true (437).

Chomsky's "shared assumptions" would likely be described more tolerantly by Barthes as cultural myths. The limitation on Chomsky's opinions is that he wants the power to define what is "true." Anything that doesn't meet his definition of truth, or his mythical perspective, is wrong. His generality about government trying to indoctrinate people with its party line is too broad, and his complaint that the press parrots the party line is his opinion. Why Chomsky is so hard on the press might be explained if one examines his attitudes toward the political power structure

It is crucially important to prevent understanding and to divert attention from the sources of our own conduct, so that elite groups can act without popular constraints to achieve their goals--which are called 'the national interest' in academic theology (The Chomsky Reader 124).

He suggests that some of this writing is crafted deliberately to manipulate and control the thinking and behavior of the readers. If we put in perspective the historical context of his stance, it may help explain his position, for he was an assertive activist against the United States' involvement in the Vietnam War. He explains further

The process of creating and entrenching highly selective, reshaped or completely

fabricated memories of the past is what we call 'indoctrination' or 'propaganda' when it is conducted by official enemies, and 'education,' 'moral instruction' or 'character building' when we do it ourselves. It is a valuable mechanism of control, since it effectively blocks any understanding of what is happening in the world (The Chomsky Reader 125).

But Chomsky fails to suggest how we are to know what is happening in the world unless we are present at each and every event so that we may decide for ourselves. Chomsky's cynicism suggests that his own personal and cultural history has produced a myth that determines both government and the press as combined enemies of the truth. Not only does Chomsky's own myth underlie his opinions of the press' response to politics, but he also demonstrates by his opinions of the press how Barthes' theory of myth produces divergent opinion.

Others share milder versions of Chomsky's claims. Tom Koch in his book, The News as Myth, links the propaganda description to the reductive code of newswriting

Contemporary journalism does have as a central function the role of propagandist in a modern democracy. Further, it appears that role is

mundanely fulfilled through a structural transformation based on what linguists define as a unary grammar. This results in a narrative pattern that defines events in terms of official statement and not through any critical method that would place the news in its broader content. Thus there is a consistent and generally accepted shift of information from the boundary to journalistic information levels (182).

This means that if writers rely on quotes from officials to explain the who, what, why, when, and where of events, then the official is the one who gets to interpret the meaning of the facts. The reductive nature of news stories does not permit the writer to explain the broader context of meaning behind the facts and quotes. Koch feels that reporters should add the larger context to news stories to make them less propagandistic.

Jay Newman describes the role of the journalist from another approach: "He deals in much the same archetypes as the creative writer does, and he confirms traditional myths and invents new ones" (99). Newman sees the journalist akin to fiction writers whose works are suffused with archetypal and mythic foundations. In spite of Chomsky's distrust of the press' motives, mythical foundations behind how stories

are written don't have to be bad. John Hartley explains

They [myths] are a product of the active generative process of language, formed and reformed according to the relations between social groups and forces. Thus one of the primary functions of the news in any medium is continuously to signify myths through the everyday detail of 'newsworthy' events (29).

We could argue, according to Hartley, that without the foundation of mythical thought, there would be no understandable news stories to tell to groups of readers. Still, readers finally must bear ultimate responsibility for evaluating what meaning they see in any news. And even when readers have assumed responsibility, there still is no perfection. Sederberg sums it up: "We never perfectly grasp who we are or how we fit into a wider community because we have no steady high ground on which to stand and take a reading. As Nietzsche pointed out, all seeing is perspective seeing; all truths are perspective truths" (7). Thus, news is never, and cannot be, any one absolute truth to all people.

Having now arrived at a point where we understand that no two people can ever see or understand anything in exactly the same way, but only partly by sharing broad cultural myths, our next step is to examine the metaphorical

structures and other figurative language used by Times reporters as they covered the Persian Gulf War of 1991. We will see how these metaphorical structures suffuse the writing and expose the cultural myths of the various sides in the war, and finally, we will consider what it all means.

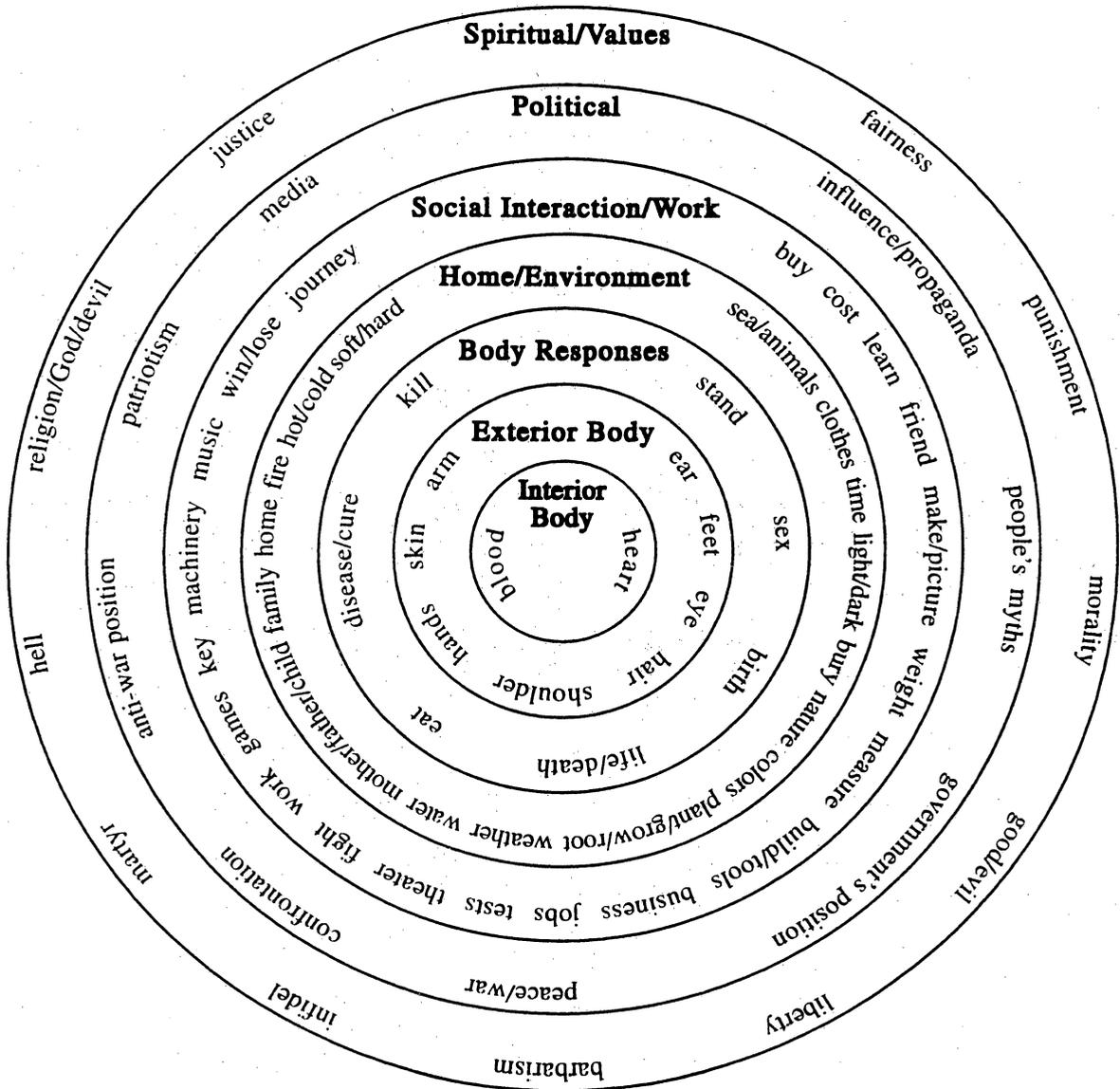
## Chapter 2

### Metaphorical Structures and Their Power to Affect Meaning

In January, February, and March of 1991, the Los Angeles Times produced a daily account of the Persian Gulf War. The reportage reveals an array of metaphorical concepts that expresses our conscious and unconscious cultural myths.

A careful examination of the subjects of these metaphors suggests a rather simple pattern illustrated in the Diagram on page 42. If we begin in the center of the diagram, we find the heart and the blood--both central to any life. In the second circle radiating outward from the center are other body parts, often used synecdochally to represent the whole person. These parts also symbolically represent the particular power or function of the part, as in the ear representing hearing, listening, or understanding. In the body responses circle are sex, birth, life, death, kill, disease, and eat (which may represent consuming, conquering, or obliterating). The fourth circle deals with home, domestic functions, and conditions that affect life in the local environment such as light which symbolizes knowledge and hope, and dark which represents ignorance and despair. Extending outward to the fifth circle are social and work-related interactions with other people, such as buying, constructing, or taking a journey. In the sixth

# Diagram Of Metaphorical Subjects Used In the Los Angeles Times



A way of looking at how we understand metaphors as seen in newswriting in the Los Angeles Times suggests an ever-widening circle. Beginning in the center with the heart and blood, we expand outward through the body, home, work, and political influences until we reach the final circle of spiritual beliefs and values.

circle we find broad political ideas and issues, our questioning or acceptance of manmade forces that would control us. Finally, in the outer circle, the farthest from our bodies and daily lives, we enter into the spiritual or metaphysical realm. This realm involves our ethical sense of right and wrong and beliefs in higher powers who may have control over us, e.g. the word hell is used to describe suffering.

While all of these metaphorical concepts are present in the Times' war reportage, some are more important for describing how we understand armed conflict than others, such as those dealing with the safety of our bodies, as in "bloody" battles or "killing" tanks.

After surveying specific examples of common metaphors, we will then focus more closely on the ones that are of particular significance to warfare. We will see how Saddam Hussein relies heavily on religious metaphor to justify his cause, how the Iraqi people and other identifiable groups understand and use many of the same body and home related metaphors. Military language uses many Social Interaction and Work related metaphors, especially those describing machines and entertainment. We will see how the Times' war reportage includes stories representing many mythical approaches to the war, and all of it is embedded with metaphors.

## Interior Body Metaphors

We begin our examination in the center of the Diagram of Metaphorical Subjects (p. 42) with heart and blood figures. These metaphors are found in reportage from both sides of the conflict. We find that as reporters use metaphors in their own texts, they also subtly add to the effect of their stories by their choices of whom and what to quote and the metaphors their sources use. Both contribute to the overall slant or effect of a given story.

Without the proper functioning and balance of the heart and blood, we know we have no life. To threaten to spill the blood and to destroy the heart strikes at our basic need to survive. We know that loss of blood may mean grave danger and destruction of the heart means death. "Having heart" means having the ability or desire to continue life or having compassion for another's plight. "Bloody" represents the unnatural loss of the very essence of life. It's caused by external injury, and it is an alarm that life could end. The use of the word "blood" in this sense, can immediately cause listeners or readers to become uneasy. Using "bloody" in war talk threatens danger and strikes at a most fundamental level of survival instinct.

In the following examples, we can see how reporters show both the Iraqis and the allies using and understanding

the power of the word "blood" in its various forms. From the American perspective, we read, "' . . . Hussein is looking for--**blood for blood**,' said . . . a military analyst" (Wilkinson and Broder, "Allies Push. . ." A1); "Defiant orders broadcast . . . what analysts described as a strategy to **bleed** the U.S.-led forces in battle. . . He [Hussein] wants to see American **blood**. . ." (Gerstenzang and Williams, "Ground War. . ." A1+); "Saddam Hussein, his back against the wall, is defiantly preparing for a **bloody test** of that theory" (McManus, "To Hussein. . ." A1); and ". . . the tank commander gathered his troops around him as the possibility of a **bloody** ground war, and death, loomed" (Chen, "Use Fear. . ." A5).

From the Iraqi's perspective we find similar use of "blood" with its overtones of loss of life: "Baghdad Radio said President Bush and his family will be haunted 'until doomsday' for **spilling civilian blood**" (Kennedy and Healy, "Allies Press. . ." A4); and "'Iraq will severely revenge every **drop of its martyrs' blood**,' the Baghdad Radio broadcast declared. . ." (Fineman and Williams, "Iraqis Vow. . ." A1+).

While blood represents life, the heart represents metaphorically the ability or desire to continue living, or our compassion for others, or the center, or most important part of a matter.

Showing the "desire to continue," Mark Fineman writes

about and quotes "one Western Military analyst, 'that the **heart** of the Iraqi army just isn't in this fight" ("For Soldiers. . ." A5). To exemplify heart showing "compassion for others," Norma Zamichow and Amy Wallace write, ". . . the fate of the two Marines--the first deployed from the West Coast apparently to be taken as POWs--gripped residents' **hearts**" ("Wives Find. . ." A11). To illustrate how heart may mean the "center of a matter," David Lauter says, "Basra serves as the headquarters of the Republican Guard, the seasoned force that Cheney once called the **heart** of Hussein's power" ("Allies Prepare. . ." A1+).

The use of blood and heart metaphors for fundamental concepts such as life sustainment, courage, and "center of a matter" is widespread in both the American and Iraqi cultures. Barthes might describe these blood and heart metaphors as examples of "common sense," evident in the beliefs of both cultures.

\* \* \*

#### Exterior Body Metaphors

Other body parts beside the heart are also frequently used as we see in the second circle of the Diagram (p.42). Parts of the exterior body, such as ear, eye, skin, shoulder, arm, hand, and hair are used to explain an action or an accomplishment. They are commonly used in ordinary language, but we can see by the following examples that they are used

in war reportage, both in the writers' own texts and in quotes from others.

We will begin with "arms." From the Middle English arm meaning "shoulder" to the Latin armare meaning tools or weapons, we can see a reasonable association between arm as "shoulder" to arm as "weapon" if we think of physical combat by butting with shoulders or striking with arms, then extending that image by adding weapons wielded with arms. For example, ". . . Fitzwater also said Bush would insist that Iraqi soldiers in Kuwait and Iraq must physically '**lay down their arms**' to show that they are retreating" (Wilkinson and Williams, "Iraq Orders. . ." A1). Here, the idiomatic expression "lay down their arms" means to drop their weapons and cease fighting. As a part of the arm or elsewhere on the body where physical strength is developed, we understand the muscle's power. Military strength can also be called "muscle" as in "Only the United States has the political stamina and military **muscle** to shape such events" (Ahmed B7).

Hands have the metaphoric ability to maintain control or enable action to occur. After an American pilot is downed behind enemy lines and while he waits for rescue, he describes his actions: "' . . . some kind of **big hand** takes over for you and you start doing things without realizing'" (Chen, "Bailout. . ." A6). If the hands are restrained, we understand an impairment of power. David

Lauter writes: ". . . U.S. and British officials opposed the move, fearing it would **tie the hands** of military commanders in case talks with the Iraqis break down" ("Iraq Accepts. . ." A1+).

Another hand action gives a clue to an attitude showing supplicating behavior: "[Gen.] Neal said '. . . We're not going in there **with hat in hand** by any stretch of the imagination'" (Wilkinson, "U.S. Troops. . ." A1). We associate removal of the hat and holding it in the hand with showing respect for a person deserving honor. Hand-holding suggests agreement and support, while staying the hand suggests restraint, as used by Doyle McManus: "And he [Bush] sent Eagleburger to Jerusalem for three days of high-visibility **hand holding** with the Israeli government . . . the Israelis . . . **"stayed their hand"** ("Doomsday. . ." A1+). And hand-wringing suggests anxiety: "In recent years there has been a lot of **hand-wringing** about declining U.S. power and influence" (Flanigan, "War May. . ." D1). Hands may also be used to indicate small, imprecise measurement, as in, ". . . American generals and strategists. . . concluded. . . that successful military campaigns should be founded on a **handful** of clearly defined concepts. . ." (Broder, "Schwarzkopf's . . ." A1+). For the reader, various functions of the hand can be understood metaphorically to suggest behaviors of political bodies.

The entire head is widely used to illustrate the

center of power. Loss of the head means death literally, or figuratively, end of power. Sheryl Stolberg quotes Larry Baldwin's comments on ending the war: "'Off with **Saddam's head** and then we'll go home'" (A9+). If Saddam figuratively loses his head, he has been removed from leadership. Leading with the head indicates direct confrontation, as in John Broder's use of Schwarzkopf's comments on our strategy: "'Our plan initially had been to . . . do exactly what the Iraqis thought we were going to do--and that's **take them head-on** into their most heavily defended area'" ("Schwarzkopf's . . ." A1+). Douglas Jehl reports that ". . . its [Iraq's] 20,000 or so soldiers charged for nearly four days across the desert, as part of a massive American flanking attack that turned to **headlong** pursuit as Iraqi forces sought to leave Kuwait" ("Images . . ." A1+). Readers will understand these head-first metaphors to suggest urgency.

Parts of the head also may be used metaphorically. The face may suggest assuming responsibility, as in "It will help that they [Americans] **face** those challenges with a new confidence and opportunities, born of success in the Gulf War" (Flanigan, "War May . . ." D1). Or face can be used to express honesty, as in "' . . . Saddam Hussein has once more **shown his true face**," Kohl told journalists in Bonn" ("Europe. . ." A12). The nature of things can be represented by face as in "Gen. Kelly said . . . the

allies' 'high technology weapons worked and actually changed the **face** of modern warfare'" (Wilkinson and Healy, "As Truce. . ." A1+). This example may be further explained by thinking of person to person interaction, in which we gather awareness of one another by observing each other's facial expressions, for they give clues of the other's attitude. When used metaphorically, references to the face can give readers hints about the attitudes and behaviors of the subjects of discussion.

Another use of face entails avoiding shame. In this war particularly, since many Arabs felt the United States was again imposing its will on the Middle East, the use of face as an expression for maintaining dignity such as by "saving face" or "losing face" becomes common: ". . . Lisa Horvath Blume, 25, works in the development office of the Denver Art Museum. 'I'm glad it's over, but I'm worried that the Arabs are going to feel they've been humiliated and will retaliate,' she said. '**Face** is very important in the Arab culture'" (Bearak A1+). If the Arabs lost "face," American readers would understand that the enemy was shamed, and shame can be associated with losing.

Other parts of the head are also used liberally, both as nouns that may show symbolic powers, but also as particular functions of them or by them that may express an attitude or mood. For example, "Bush is '**biting his lip**' to contain his unhappiness with Gorbachev's diplomatic

efforts. . ." (Nelson, "Bush Reported. . ." A1). Readers will understand the physical action of biting his lip to signify holding back emotional expression.

Eyes and ears represent knowing, awareness. For example, "When Schwarzkopf's intelligence picture faltered, Army commandos and Marine Corp reconnaissance teams became the **eyes and ears** of the Central Command" (Healy, "Special Forces. . ." A1+). The effect of using the sense organs, eyes and ears, metaphorically, immediately suggests to the reader the functions of those organs. We understand that the commandos and reconnaissance teams are gathering information about the enemy's whereabouts and movement. Other uses of eye may more literally describe seeing or being seen. Commonly known in general usage are "right before their eyes," "the public eye," or go "eyeball to eyeball." A black eye can represent having suffered a figurative setback in a conflict. The Times prints a story about a town in California whose leaders invited all those military persons resisting the war to find sanctuary there. "'Arcata has received a **black eye**,' said the group's president. . ." Morrison and Murphy, "Flashbacks. . ." A1+). The town's "black eye" occurred when the townspeople disagreed with the leaders who had declared the town a sanctuary. The citizens resented the idea of their town's reputation becoming unpatriotic.

Ears can represent failure to communicate or

repudiation, as in "Hussein's deceptions have fallen on **deaf ears**" (Summers, "Hussein's Deceptions. . ." A8+). An unusual Times story shows ears representing a conquest. After having killed an opponent, the conqueror cuts off the enemy's ears as a trophy: "Some reviewers drew a parallel between the ancient enemy [of Israel], Haman, and the new one, Saddam Hussein. In some homes, where a traditional cookie called **Haman's ear** is served, families changed the name to **Saddam's ear**" (Williams, "Israel. . ." (A12). Rather than possessing the literal ear of Saddam, the cookies are symbolic representations of the ear, and further, they can be completely eliminated by devouring them.

Letting out information is often associated with the functions of the mouth. We are familiar with the expression "giving voice to," which means communication using words. Withholding information also may be associated with the mouth. "Throughout the conflict, allied military commanders have been extremely **tight-lipped** about Iraqi casualties" (Gerstenzang, "Tens of. . ." A8+). "Tight-lipped" means the lips are closed preventing the mouth from uttering words, therefore no information is being revealed.

Personification can also be expressed through sounds from the mouth. "'They [Iraqi troops] shoot all the time,' said [Kuwaiti] Dr. Baroon: 'They just hear the **voice** of

the plane and start shooting'" (Drogin, "Kuwaiti Doctors. . ." A1+). A plane's sound becomes a human voice bearing a message of danger. In another example, "In a city apparently savaged by Iraqi occupiers. . . the **throaty grumbling** of tanks and gun trucks shortly after dawn brought a fearful populace out of hiding. . ." (Murphy and Drogin, "Crowds. . ." A1+). Readers may sense that tanks and gun trucks take on a dangerous, monster-like life with their "throaty grumbling."

Finally, with the head, we can determine offense by figurative actions, such as "It proved much easier to get us [reporters] **out of his hair**" (Balzar, "No War. . ." A8+). Just as no one wants pesky knots, twigs, or insects caught in their hair, neither does an official want to be bothered by pesky reporters. The hair metaphor trivializes the efforts of the reporters by comparing them to something pesky caught in the hair. In another more violent metaphor, we read ". . . the 24th Mechanized Division formed a further piece of the **noose closing around [the neck of] the Republican Guard**" (Broder, "Schwarzkopf's War. . ." A1+). Readers will understand the choking of a noose as a deadly danger, therefore if the Republican Guard has a noose around its neck, it is in danger of being defeated.

Metaphors that describe violence to the bodies of our enemies and fear that our bodies will be hurt by enemies

suffuse our language. These metaphors indicate an understanding of conflict that entails hurting our enemy more than our enemy hurts us. For example, "Some U.S. Army troops have affectionately pinned a wartime nickname on President Bush: '**THUMBSCREWS.**' . . . Said Lt. Col. Bill Chamberlain. . . 'At every corner, George turns the **thumbscrews** on Saddam Hussein. . .'" ("Bush. . ." A8). Readers will understand Bush's strength over Saddam by the idea that he can torture him with symbolic thumbscrews.

The following examples show how we may understand military strength by comparing it to the condition of other body parts: ". . . the soldiers' desire to **save their own skins**" (Sahagun, "Objectors. . ." A11); ". . . Washington expected Riyadh to **grow weak-kneed**" (Lamb, "Ferocity. . ." A9+); "Iraqi forces . . . have been left with little **stomach** for battle. . ." ("At the Outset. . ." B4); ". . . coalition forces cut off the **main body** of Iraq's Republican Guard. . ." (Wilkinson, "Iraqis. . ." A1); "' . . . we are not after the total destruction of Iraq, **breaking its backbone**'" (Gerstanzang, "Soviet Peace. . ." A1+); ". . . Clausewitz warned that 'sooner or later someone will come along with a sharp sword and **lop off [their] arms**'" (Summers, "Hussein's Deceits. . ." A8+); and "'We are not planning to . . . **dismember** Iraq,' he said" (Gerstanzang

and Williams, "Bush Halts. . ." A1+). The last two suggest violence so severe they border on butchery. These violent expressions of harm to the body somewhat parallel the literal violence of war. They come close to giving readers accurate sensory images of battlefields.

Add the humiliation of blows to the buttocks to the idea of winning, and we have the very colloquial, "It felt good . . . We kicked their **asses**," said Capt. Bill Wainwright. . ." (Kennedy, "Allies Battle. . ." A6). The idea of kicking ass goes farther than just winning a battle. It adds the idea of disgracing the enemy and seeking revenge. "We're going to . . . **spank them** pretty hard. . ." said Maj. Craig Huddleston" (Balzar, "U.S. Marines. . ." A1+). Spanking the enemy suggests the humiliation one might inflict on a child as punishment.

If metaphors truly motivate our actions, then our war-like actions are rooted in how we perceive our very body processes and our atavistic, survival-of-the-fittest mentality. Times reportage merely reflects these metaphoric ways of understanding. Those who complain about the violence in our society might find an explanation for its cause in our language. If metaphors do lay a foundation for action, and if we wanted to and could change our metaphors into more peaceful, productive figures, it

might help change our old, violent ways of seeing the world.

\* \* \*

### Body Response Metaphors

As we move from the Exterior Body circle of the Metaphorical Subjects Diagram (p.42) into the third area of Body Responses, we find violence and aggression still used prominently. Although life, birth, and the body position of "stand" as it means supporting an idea are common throughout our language, those of killing and dying are obviously linked to the violence of war. Sexual conquest (power over) and devouring (eating) one's opponent are also used against the enemy and link back to the survival-of-the fittest mentality. War is also seen as a disease, and that idea lends itself to cures for the disease.

As a voluntary body response, the sexual conquest of rape as a metaphor packs a chilling effect on readers. Readers know the literal act of rape is to shame, humiliate, overpower, and control a victim with sexual aggression. Therefore, the metaphorical use of rape to describe the behavior of an enemy is to place that enemy in the most abhorrent light. Rape is generally understood as a masculine aggressive behavior, which historically has suited male soldiers. As women soldiers assume more combat roles, we may see the rape metaphor's current masculine

connotation change to neutral gender; or possibly, women warriors will assume different metaphors to describe their way of handling conflicts. As Sederberg says, ". . . even if we manage to loosen the grip of a particular meaning, we do so only by embracing another" (5). The masculine rape metaphor used to describe the behavior of enemies, however, remains strong. If reporters describe Saddam as a rapist, their own attitude toward him is clearly revealed. And that is what they do. "While the world waited, Saddam Hussein systematically **raped**, pillaged and plundered a tiny nation . . ." (Gerstenzang, "Had 'No. . ." A1+). Hussein personally is called a rapist: "The victims of the **rapist** will simply grow in number. . . until someone has the courage to forcibly put a stop to it. . ." (Buccola B6). By choosing to use the forms of rape to describe his actions, the reporters have chosen a most repugnant term to put Hussein in a hated and disgusting light. Readers may sympathize with the abject humiliation of the victims, and understand the destruction of their sense of safety, and the exertion of brutal power over them. This type of reporting cannot be called objective, but it shows how language grows out of and reveals the writers' myths.

Other clearly masculine metaphors have to do with the condition of and use or malfunction of the penis. Erection and performance may be used to show power or control over a victim, but to "screw up" suggests incorrect penis function.

"Mother fucker," a name suggesting the taboo idea of incest, may be used to insult someone who is perceived as depraved or incompetent. These penis references may be used in a variety of ways. For instance, "We have not, as some might suggest, 'gone off **half-cocked**'" (Baker, "Baker Test. . ." A10). Half-cocked is doing it wrong, whereas the implication is that going off fully cocked is powerful. "'From now on, I say '**screw it**,' one voice said slowly. 'All those **mothers [mother fuckers]** die'" (Jehl, "Soldiers. . ." A7). "Screw it" suggests unrestrained masculine sexual performance. The soldiers don't need to control themselves anymore. The "mother fucker" reference implies that they [the Iraqis] are so depraved that they deserve to die. Another example says "Already the heat-seeking Chapparral missiles on his rig bore new inscriptions, one of them simply labeled: '**Up Yours**'" (A7). This inscription suggests that the enemy is threatened with humiliation by using the idea of sexual assault. Another says, "'When things don't go their way,' said retired Gen. Edward C. Meyer. . . 'they tend to **screw up** badly'" (Freed, "Boning . . ." A1+). They are so incompetent that they can't perform well. Finally, according to a British TV analyst, "Why don't we just admit it was a **cock-up** and that it won't happen again?" (Tuohy, "British . . ." A5). Once again, the metaphorical reference is to a malfunction of the penis.

Most of these masculine metaphors for sexual aggression or sexual malfunction are spoken by male troops. They show a disquieting metaphorical approach in which sexual force and concern about correct penis function are used as weapons against an enemy.

The concept of devouring the enemy's flesh also conveys the idea of conquering an enemy. If he is killed and eaten, we have conquered his body and even used it as food to strengthen ourselves. This harks back to the hunter/hunted stage of early man. For instance: ". . . from Augustus Richard Norton. . . 'It may well make regional powers think twice about **gobbling up** their neighbors. . .'" or "according to Adm. William J. Crowe, Jr. . . 'If it goes badly, we'll be **in the soup**. . .'" In this same article, another government figure continued the metaphor: "Harold Brown . . . says . . . 'One effect of this crisis is that it will **raise the appetite** of all countries . . . for high-technology weapons'" (Wright, "Gulf Lesson . . ." All).

Reporter John Balzar creates for us a mood almost like the suspense buildup in a horror story: "In the vast sands of nothingness to the north, they lay in wait, stropping their steel and **thirsting for the blood** of young Americans ("When the . . ." H2). Later Mark Fineman quotes a Jordanian refugee from Kuwait as he supports Saddam: "'Saddam will **eat you Americans alive!** . . . He can eat

**everything.** He can **eat** rocks, snakes, donkeys, trees, missiles and soldiers'" ("Cult of . . ." A1+). Another article offers, ". . . a senior official said. . . 'If you made it impossible for Iraq to defend the area, you could be **servicing up a tasty morsel** for Iran'" (McManus and Kempster, "U.S. Forging. . ." A1+). These metaphors for eating the enemy, which break the universal taboo of eating human flesh, are particularly powerful, and they appear in both American and Iraqi/Arab expressions. Readers all can understand their primitive foundation: when we eat something, we have to kill it first.

Television critic Howard Rosenberg carries the eating metaphor into his comments on war reporting seen on CNN and the BBC. He says, "There are plenty of **bones to pick** with CNN's continuous **spewing** of **raw**, evolving stories. . .", and "These [battle tape snippets] were **tastes** with most of the real war . . . left to our imagination. . . Many news-**hungry** Americans . . . are **eating up** every crisply spoken word of the BBC" ("Between Media . . ." A9). Rosenberg's use of the eating metaphor suggests that the viewers of CNN are piggishly gobbling up without thought what is broadcast. Christopher Kenneally continues the idea: ". . . instantaneous electronic coverage of allied bombing raids, military press conferences and Iraqi responses **feed** a seemingly insatiable global **appetite** for up-to-the-moment news" ("The Beeb'. . ." F9). Here, readers may associate

the hunger for news with an animal-like feeding frenzy.

From the primitive sexual dominance and eating metaphors relating to bodily functions, we move to images of birth and death, disease and injury, then curing. Body position is used, as in standing up to show support or lying down to show giving up. Images and metaphors that particularly apply to warfare are those of disease or injury, curing, and dying.

The Iraqi occupation of Kuwait is called a disease. Yousef, a Kuwaiti flyer, said, "'When we have to drop bombs on our own fields, we feel frustrated. But we have to take the dirt out of it anyway. It's a **cancer**. We need to **take it out**'" (Murphy, "Skills of . . ." A1). Readers will know cancer is potentially deadly and may require surgical sacrifice of some healthy tissue to remove it all, therefore if enemy occupation is likened to a cancer, even some of the Kuwaitis' own land must be sacrificed to get it all out. Other illness metaphors include pain and blindness. [Regarding Iraqi POWs] ". . . one Pentagon official said, 'It's not nearly as bad as having to **root** them out of bunkers. But it's still a big **pain**'" (Richter, "Masses of . . ." A1+). Even having to deal with POWs is physical suffering, as in pulling a damaged tooth out by its roots. As blindness hinders one's ability to identify placement of objects around him or her, so blindness in battle can be understood when soldiers are thwarted from taking accurate aim at their

targets. "Iraqi gunners were forced to fire **blind**" (Drogin, "'Saddam Line'. . ." A1+).

Moving away from actual battle, we find illness metaphors used for other war-related difficulties: "Airlines, however, continued to **suffer** through one of the worst travel seasons on record as the ground war unfolded" (Shiver D1+); "In addition, the Gulf War is **bloating** the U.S. Budget deficit" (Risen A21); or "'The fact that Iraq has moved so quickly to accept allied terms for ending the war indicates they know they **are hurting**,' said one Administration official" (Lauter, " Iraq Accepts. . ." A1+). Readers can understand the war-caused hardships borne by airlines, the increasing U. S. deficit, and Iraq's problems in terms of physical illness which they have personally experienced.

As war and its related difficulties are seen metaphorically as bodily disease or injury, so treating the "illness" of war, or seeing war itself as a healer, involves metaphors related to healing or curing. Using surgery to correct a problem sounds precise, sterile, yet urgent: "After nearly 48 relentless hours of **surgical** cruise missile strikes and bombing runs, Baghdad resembles a ghost town" (Fineman, "Baghdad's . . ." A1). Another reporter on the same day uses the same metaphor: ". . . the air war will continue to feature high-tech **surgical** strikes" (Healy, Raids on . . ." A8). And that is close to what the missile

strikes actually were: precise, sterile to the missile crews that fired them from hundreds of miles away, and purposefully urgent.

The Patriot missile is seen as a cure: ". . . an anti-missile missile called Patriot was proving the allies [sic] most effective Scud **antidote**" ("Hostile Skies. . ." H8). The expression "healing the wounds" is common, as in "'I think this war has **healed the wounds** of the Vietnam War' said Maj. Baxter Ennis" (Chen and Richter, "U.S. Shakes . . ." A1). If readers understand a wound that won't heal, they should be able to compare the unsatisfactory end of the Vietnam War to a long-festering wound that has finally healed. Mental and/or spiritual healing is addressed as well. "Only time will give full measure of the **catharsis** of the Persian Gulf War, but it is inconceivable that the war initiated the **exorcism** of the Zionist **demon** from the Saudis' political psyche" (Norton, "The Wreckage . . ." M1+). "Catharsis" and "exorcism" represent the letting go of something bad. "Demons" represent the ultimate evil. For author Norton to suggest that the war was a cleansing and that to the Saudis the Zionists were demons in need of exorcising, is writing using metaphors so dramatic that their use may polarize readers for or against the war and the Zionists.

All of these metaphors dealing with illness and healing are applied broadly to nations or groups, but when

we move to the subject of the body's death, two contradictory things happen: the expressions try to soften or dehumanize the dying, or they do the opposite by focusing in with excruciating detail on the awfulness of death. The softening effect is seen in words like "loss," "casualty," "sacrifice," or "collateral damage" for death, but some expressions are even more unsympathetic toward death, such as "At the Pentagon, one operations officer who declined to be identified said news reporters were 'making too big a deal' of the 12 Marines dead. 'The Iraqis **lost** up to 500,' the officer said. 'We waxed them'" (Kennedy, "Allies Battle . . ." A1+). Even pro-military readers are likely to be put off by the officer's uncompassionate description of killing.

One particularly expressive piece of writing is done by Douglas Jehl. If soldiers are to survive, he captures the need for them to see the dead enemy dehumanized. One wonders whether Jehl is writing this account to satirize the macho "killer" instinct or to try to capture accurately the larger context of the mental state of soldiers who must suppress emotion as they bury enemy dead

'Some of those guys [Iraqi soldiers] are not going to get a proper burial,' Col James Riley said of the enemy forces now arrayed in front of his infantry brigade. 'Some of these are going to be **laid to rest** right

there in the holes they've been sitting in. They're just going to be covered up as we go by.'

'Now that's a sad thing,' he said, 'but I don't want you to be sad about it.'

His voice rose a notch and took on a tougher edge. 'Because those **sombitches** are the same **trigger-pullers** that are out there trying to kill you. And if any of you have any problems with that, then you're in the wrong business.'

. . . 'My goal is for this to be a **killer brigade**,' Riley told his officers carefully, chomping methodically on a wad of Red Man tobacco almost always lodged against his cheek. '**Killers survive**' ("Veterans. . ." A7).

This is another obvious example of a story that could not be considered objective. It is written in the style of a novel as it makes a tough-guy character out of Riley. By adding sensory details such as "his voice rose a notch and took on a tougher edge" and telling that Riley was "chomping methodically on a wad of Red Man tobacco almost always lodged against his cheek," the reader pictures Riley as a theatrical character designed to incite an emotional response such as sympathy, respect, or disgust. It is up

to the readers to respond according to their own cultural backgrounds. This type of writing does have a function, for it gives a picture of the mood of the troops at the front as it creates a larger context for the plain who, what, why, when, and where of formula newswriting.

In contrast to Jehl's article, Rosenstiel expresses the opposite approach to death. The death of some Americans is seen in images that pinpoint details which epitomize the meaning of the terrible loss. The writer uses emotional details such as ". . . a **flag-draped coffin**. . . a **lonely bag-pipe playing 'Amazing Grace,'** interviews and pictures of **tearful wives**. . . **mourning war's incalculable cost, its ultimate loss**" (Rosenstiel, "Dealing With. . ." All). And the reportage for the death of Americans is often written as whole mini-biographies of each soldier, so that Americans can share the sacrifice and the finality of that death. Again, details to capture the idea of the finality of death are scattered throughout the sentences

. . . Marine Lance Cpl. Thomas A. Jenkins, was killed in battle Jan. 29 in a light-armored vehicle at the Saudi-Kuwaiti border. His **freckled, stern gaze, frozen** on the cover of Time magazine, became a **tearful reminder** of the **sacrifice** small towns across America have made for freedom.

. . . said Harvey Tomlinson, a family

friend who watched Tommy grow up at the ranch in the rural Sierra foothills of California's Mariposa County. . . 'This is not going to go away in a day, a week, a month or a year. And we feel that.

'Death is forever' (Morrison and Murphy, "Flashbacks. . ."Al).

As the authors pinpoint specific details of Jenkin's life, that he grew up in rural ranch country, that he was freckled, they humanize him to the reader. Then to end with the quote by his friend, "Death is forever," adds a dramatic finale. A detail-rich article such as this subtly implies that conflict based on war is vanity, for the war-death of any loved one is a foolish and extravagant cost to settle a dispute. In fact, death is at the center of most mythical fear of war for all cultures. For those who may die, there is the fear of being forgotten, and for the survivors, death means the absence forever of their loved ones. In some ways for the survivors, death may be the beginning of a whole new set of metaphors. But for the dead, death ends all metaphors.

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#### Home and Environment Metaphors

Moving outside the body, the next circle of

metaphorical thought (See Diagram, p. 42) involves the dwelling place and the knowledge and sensations associated with daily living. Here we find the spatial concepts of up versus down and the passing of time; the sensory concepts of hot versus cold, light versus darkness, and soft versus hard; the associative idea of family members; and then we encounter concepts in the domesticity of home such as clothing, and nature as it involves water, fire, plants, animals, and weather. So far in this study, the scope of metaphorical meaning has encompassed the life of the physical body. Now we expand outward to include the safety and life-continuing properties of home. We are still centered on our own survival, a key concern as we try to explain warfare.

In general, we use the idea of being up and height to mean being or feeling in control. This can be demonstrated by expressions such as "having the upper hand," "feeling up-beat," or "standing up to an enemy." If we think of being down or under, one is losing control as in the expressions "bringing the enemy down," "backing down," "a low-life," "plummeting hopes," "dragging down," or "living under" the influence of some problem.

An example of the up-versus-down metaphor can be seen in David Broder's report of troops' morale before the ground war

And morale among American troops is as

**high** now as it ever will be, officials said.

'You can't keep them **at a peak** of readiness for very long,' an official said. 'You can **bring them down** and take them **back up**, but you can't do that very many times before you take the edge off' ("U.S. Military. . ." A7+).

Here height or up means being prepared to engage in battle, while "bring them down" suggests relaxing readiness relating to our senses.

Temperature, as in degrees of hot and cold, can also relate to receptiveness or rejection. We understand cold to be unfriendly and/or inactive while warm is friendly or very active. For example, "Bush is described as being dismayed and incensed at what he considers Hussein's **coldblooded** disregard for his own people. . ." (Nelson, "Bush Waging. . ." A1+). Another reporter states, "U.S. officials have also been **cool** to a cease-fire" (Williams, "Cease-Fire. . ." A7).

For an example of hot, meaning active, we read ". . .the U.S. attack helicopters had charged so far ahead of their supply lines **in the heat of battle** that they were scattered at temporary allied bases. . ." (Chen, "No Place . . ." A1+), or ". . . it [the vessel Princeton] has a **hot line** to give immediate news. . ." (Reich "Navy Wives. . ." A9+). Both

of these examples illustrate the idea of heat causing increased activity.

Another sensory perception common to our home environment is our perception of light. Light enables us to see, therefore to be able to protect ourselves from danger, while dark means absence of being able to see, which can leave us vulnerable to danger. Taking this to a more abstract level, we might say that light is often used to show presence of knowledge, understanding, or good, while dark may represent ignorance, harmful intentions, or evil. These are used by both sides in a war and may take various forms such as in "glimmer of hope," "in the dark," "fading," "illuminating," "ray of light," "sun" and "shadow," "blackout," "black list," and "black humor."

The light versus dark metaphor is understood and used by both sides of the conflict. Reporter Kenneth Freed explains the Iraqi official position on terrorism. "Iraq . . . said Baghdad-sponsored terrorists will soon strike against American and allied targets worldwide and turn President Bush into 'a hostage in his **Black** House'" ("Iraq Predicts. . ." A9). Here, Iraqis share the interpretation of white or light as good and dark or black as bad by changing White House to Black House. Printing this Iraqi quote in the American press is more likely to convince Americans that Iraq is a legitimate enemy rather than arouse sympathy for Hussein's position.

By using light and dark to represent knowledge or its lack, Daniel Williams gives us a look at the Iraqi citizens' position. "January 15 is the one concrete milestone of life in the city. Everything else is **clouded** by rumor and uncertainty. . .Left to drift **in the dark**, citizens grab avidly at any piece of news" ("Many Baghdadis. . ." A20).

Bush uses the good/evil meaning of the light versus dark metaphor liberally in his State of the Union Address

As Americans, we know there are times when we must step forward and accept our responsibilities to lead the world away from the **dark chaos** of dictators, toward the **brighter promise** of a better **day**. . . This is the burden of leadership--and the strength that has made America the **beacon** of freedom in a searching world (Gerstenzang, "'We Will . . ." A1).

The Iraqis and Bush each call the other side dark, meaning evil, which suggests that the mythical differences in their approaches toward one another are vast and complex, in spite of the fact that each understands the same metaphor.

Hard and soft metaphors also are useful in war reporting, for hard represents strength and resolve, but soft suggests weakness, toleration of wrong, or willingness to abandon a previously, inflexibly held position. The idea of flexibility itself, vacillating between hard and soft,

can be used for change.

A rather common example of the hard metaphor is used by Sara Fritz: "Even opponents of the President's **hard-line** policy against Iraq acknowledged that the mood is changing on Capitol Hill" ("Mission's . . ." A9). "Hard-line" indicates that the President's position is firm and unchanging. Harry Summers uses soft to mean weakening the enemy: "All agree that air strikes are essential to **soften enemy entrenchments**. . ." ("Allied Forces. . ." A8). While "soften" here may sound deceptively gentle, it is a stark contrast to what actually is happening as air strikes are not only destroying enemy weapons, but violently killing enemy troops. The idea of being neither hard nor soft is illustrated by Williams and Gerstenzang in "The Soviet Union . . . had seen what it called '**new flexibility**' in Iraq's position" ("Bush Rejects. . ." A1+). This shows abandonment of a firmly held position infavor of change.

Mu broadr scope than up/downand ho/cld, though, are the metaphors drawn fromamil relationships. The most well known metaphor naming a family member is, of course, Hussein's reference to the Gulf War as the "mother of all battles." Early on, before the United Nations imposed its January 15 deadline for the Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait, Hussein warned that any armed resistance to his forces in Kuwait would result in "the mother of all battles." This metaphor had a dramatic effect on the world.

In a powerful way it took the respected relationship of a mother and her expected behavior of protecting and nurturing her children and used it to describe a terrible and feared social upheaval--that of war--in which mothers and children, especially sons, may die violent deaths. Radio, television, and newspapers worldwide repeated Hussein's threat and took it to mean that Iraq would fight viciously with all its rumored arsenal of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. "Mother of all battles" may have become the fundamental metaphor of the entire war, but contrary to Hussein's threats against his opposition, the "mother of all battles" was turned against his own troops.

Another example of the power of family relationships to our understanding is illustrated by the approach of Arabs who joined in the coalition against Hussein's troops. The allied Arabs dealt with the problem of having to fight their Arab "brothers." This use of brother connotes shared mythical, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. They were fighting on Arab soil against inhabitants of the land whose families shared the same religion and historical roots. They were exposing to the whole world a "family" breakdown.

Also related to the home are metaphors using various types of animals, most of which would be familiar to a rural family for their use for work, food, or clothing. In the Times war reportage, both the Iraqis and the allies use the people-are-animals metaphors, sometimes as insults because

of some foolish or ignorant characteristic of the animals. Animals may be stubborn, like donkeys, or mindless followers, like sheep. The idea of someone being called a hawk because of willingness to attack like the predatory bird or being called a dove because of a non-violent nature like the peaceful bird is widely understood and is used by political figures as well as reporters. Also, aerial combat has been known for a long time as a dogfight. But other not-so-common animal-related metaphors are sprinkled throughout the Times reportage in the writers' own words as well as in the quotes in the stories.

The following examples illustrate a fraction of the variety: ". . . allied ground forces exchanged sporadic fire with the Iraqis occupying Kuwait, calibrated their tank cannons, played grim games to psych themselves for close combat and **paved the ground** awaiting the call to advance" (Balzar, "Ground Troops. . ." A7). The reader will understand "paved the ground" as behavior of a bull waiting to charge. "Crocodile tears" are known as large, attention-getting tears showing phony emotion. "Syria. . . accused Jordan of shedding '**crocodile tears**' over the plight of Iraq" (Freed and Ross, "Egypt Signals. . ." A10). "'Dead **donkeys** know no fear,' muttered a middle-age cab driver as he drove blithely through the first air raid warning. . ." (Montalbano, "Turks Near. . ." A10). "Donkeys" appear as stubborn fools. And, "'The air attacks

have left him strategically **defanged** and attacks on his ground forces will leave him tactically **declawed**,' said Edward Peck, a former U.S. chief of mission in Baghdad" (Abramson, "Hussein on . . ." A1+). Saddam's forces, like a fierce lion, cannot fight well without teeth and claws.

Two other uses of the people-are-animals metaphors seem particularly hostile toward the enemy. These metaphors equate the enemy with game to be killed as sport or food, or they denigrate the enemy by name calling which equates the enemy with the weaknesses or undesirable qualities of an animal. John Balzar reports on a helicopter attack: "Basra was the bottleneck through which the Iraqis were trying to squeeze . . . to escape the encircling coalition army. 'It's about as close to a **turkey shoot** as you can get,' said Lt. Col. Paul Murtha . . ." ("Forward U.S. . . ."A7). Hunters would "encircle" their game, then shoot the turkeys (known for their stupidity) for sport. In another article on the same helicopter battalion, Balzar writes, "Later, he [pilot Ron Balak] recalled, 'a guy came up to me. . . and he said, 'By God, I thought we had shot into a damn farm. It looked like somebody opened up the **sheep pen**'" ("Apache. . ." A1+). A reader envisions the enemy panicked as sheep mindlessly dashing this way and that.

In an example demeaning the enemy by using animal names, Melissa Healy and John Balzar write, "In response to

the bombardment, U.S. pilots said, the Iraqis have moved their tanks and their artillery around Kuwait 'like **cockroaches**' ("Cheney. . ." A1+). Cockroaches are known to readers as disgusting insects attracted by filth. Hussein is regarded as a trained dog as Bearak quotes a citizen: ". . . said Dick Kornbluth, a retired businessman . . . 'We have an aggressive dictator **brought to heel**'" (A1+).

Lastly, within the circle of home environment metaphors is the use of weather. The most obvious, of course, is the name the United States gave to the attack when the allies changed their stance from providing a Desert "Shield" to causing a Desert "Storm". The Times reportage is rich with weather metaphors to describe the dramatic actions of weapons used in Desert Storm.

Storms themselves and all their features make up many war metaphors. These include references to lightning, thunder, rain, flood, wind, and fire. Before the war had even begun, we see and hear references similar to those from a weather report. Sara Fritz reports, "Added Sen. Lloyd Bentsen D-Tex.): 'The **outlook** for an agreement on some kind of settlement before Jan. 15 is **bleak**'" ("Mission's Failure. . ." A9).

The Times editorial on January 11 took up the weather theme: "War reports are like war itself. Some describe moments so quiet there is nothing to hear but heartbeats.

Others cover **tempests of thunder** and violence so random . . . that two people seldom can remember them the same way" ("The Pentagon. . ." B6).

After U.S. attacks had begun, we read: "Iraq fired missiles into the civilian populations of Tel Aviv and Haifa early today in a **thunderous** retaliation as the United States and its allies bombed Iraq and occupied Kuwait for a second day with relentless fury" (Tuohy and Nelson, "Iraqi Missiles. . ." A1). And "In the midst of a widening war Saturday, Jordan's border with Iraq was a **calm oasis** in the **eye of the storm**. The expected **outflow** of refugees fleeing the American-led bombing of Iraq was increasing but not yet a **flood**" ("Exodus From . . ." A21). If readers imagine a monstrous hurricane-like storm swirling across the land with its calm center (eye) providing only temporary relief from flooding caused by torrential rains, they will be able to picture the dramatic turmoil of war, with refugees being the flood caused by a rain of bombs. In another flooding metaphor by Rudy Abramson we read: "The voice of Saddam Hussein was heard on Iraqi Radio on Sunday for the first time since the **deluge** of missiles and bombs descended on his military machine" ("Hussein on . . ." A7).

Balzar is particularly expressive in his use of animal, home, and weather metaphors

. . . troops of the U.S. coalition have responded not just with a **rain of bombs**

but with a psychological war campaign and some terrorism of their own--the frightening **bay** of a sprawling professional army, locked, loaded, limber and each day seeming to draw closer to the trip wire . . . At night on the front lines between Saudi Arabia and Iraq and occupied Kuwait, the horizon glows orange sometimes. A **sunset of fire**--the **carpet-bombing** of B-52s, the low-flying fighter bombers scuttling over targets" ("Troops Send . . ." A8).

"Rain of bombs" and "sunset of fire" set a violent weather scene while the "frightening bay" of an army increases the tension as the reader pictures the restless hunt-lust of a pack of dogs. Contrast these violent pictures against "carpet bombing," for "carpet" sounds warm and comforting against a cold floor while "bombing" explodes and destroys; combine the two terms, "carpet bombing," and the effect is disconcerting. The combined effect of Balzar's metaphors creates a vivid scene to help readers understand war's setting.

One often used metaphor, calling war a fog, is echoed by several writers but whose origin is pinned down by Richard Falk: "The phrase 'the **fog of war**' comes to us from the great German military thinker Karl von Clausewitz. The Gulf War, despite being the focus of unprecedented media

attention, remains in a **heavy shroud of fog**" ("West Pretends. . ." M5). Here, the fog metaphor, which suggests that what is actually happening cannot be clearly understood, also is infused with the concept of a shroud, a death wrap, which adds an additional layer of meaning to the events of war, linking ignorance of what is happening to what could be the worst possible consequence, death.

Add clouds to the idea of war and we read: "Before the shooting began, the Pope's unavailing efforts to dispel **clouds of war**--'an adventure with no return,' as he characterized the crisis--ranged from prayer to a last-minute peace plan" (Montalbano, "Pope. . ." A8). Here, "clouds of war" metaphorically represent the threat of a gathering storm.

The condition of the sea also helps explain strife. For example, "regarding the quality of his judgment, the caliber of his leadership, the determination of his troops and, indeed, the measure of luck he carries, the **tide** of this 'mother of battles' **will turn**" ("Today's Pattons. . ." A7). A tide helps sailors launch or land ships, depending on the tide's height and direction. Readers will understand a "turning tide" as one bringing a change in fortune. Daniel Williams uses a sea metaphor to explain Israelis' concerns: "We in Israel must remind ourselves that from now on we will be confronting not only the Arab coalition of junior partners in the American victory, but a

**seething, choppy sea** of Arabs, **surging** with inner doubts, seeking new heroes and symbols to identify with,' predicted Ehud Yaari. . ." ("Israelis Fear. . ." A9+). This metaphor suggests unrest; no one can predict how the Arabs are likely to respond to the results of the war.

We are not alone in using the weather metaphors. The Iraqis use similar concepts: "Iraq's official news agency broadcast reports that the incursions in the Khafji area were merely 'the beginning of a **thunderous storm blowing on the Arab desert**'" (Kennedy and Broder, "Allies. . ." A1+). This storm metaphor implies that the Iraqis are the same as "thunderous storms," and readers will think the Iraqis are tough and dangerous.

Finally, we turn to how fire can add powerful meaning, as exemplified by George W. Ball

The ending of the Gulf War should force us to recognize that the region is a **dark** and ill-kept storehouse of **flammable materials** capable of **bursting into new conflagrations**. A disastrous **firestorm** might be triggered at any time by an accumulation of corrosive discontents. . ." ("Victory. . ." M1).

Especially around a home, destructive fire represents loss of shelter and utensils for livelihood. It leaves its victims helpless. A "storehouse of flammable materials

capable of bursting into new conflagrations" suggests the loss of stored possessions as well as dreaded spread of fire to other structures. If a "firestorm" is generated, it can take on a life of its own and be difficult to stop. "Corrosive" discontents who may ignite this firestorm can smoulder from within until a fire begins spontaneously. These metaphors will alert readers to a dangerous situation.

References to home pervade our language and influence our way of understanding. That these home-based metaphors are so prevalent in the writings of Times reporters and in the few pieces of information from the Iraqis suggests at least some metaphor linkage unifying myths between cultures.

As we move to the next circle in our Diagram of Metaphorical Subjects (p. 42), the circle of Social Interaction and Work, we see that our metaphorical perspective still is closely linked to the language of our daily lives.

\* \* \*

#### Social Interaction and Work Metaphors

Many common metaphorical concepts employ references to what one might encounter in the normal activities of life: recreation, entertainment, travel, and various forms of work. These are frequently used to describe many aspects of life including war.

For instance, common metaphors that refer to daily work activities, those associated with building or construction, also may be applied figuratively to the job of war. For example, foundation means a beginning or a fundamental argument, hammer may mean to strike the enemy hard, or go to great lengths may mean exhausting every possible alternative to avoid conflict.

As we see things in terms of construction, we also find we understand ideas in terms of travel. Times reporters use the broad metaphorical idea, "life is a journey" (Lakoff and Turner 3-4); that is, to live one's life means to move onward, and in case of war, it means furthering the war effort. We find terms used for ship navigation to indicate potential progress, such as in "launching" to mean beginning an attack, or keeping "an even keel" as in maintaining control. Other less obvious metaphors for journey are used in expressions such as "guideposts," which indicate progress, or the simple "go to war" meaning begin the hostilities.

While these journey metaphors are neutral in their emotional meanings of war's changes, economic or home management metaphors describe the cost of war and provide harsh, emotional impact when we consider the stark, ripping away of loved ones that we call the price of war.

Two common expressions used throughout the Times war reportage are "the price" and "the cost." Graham E. Fuller

comments, "We have all **paid a high price** for this military victory **in treasure and blood**" (B5), and another writes, "But the Iraqis let loose a last-gasp barrage of heavy antiaircraft fire that **cost the lives** of eight G.Is. . ." ("No Place. . ." A1+). Readers understand the payment of lives in exchange for victory, and as long as the lives spent are strangers, the news may be tolerable. But when the "cost" is a person's own loved one, few would willingly "pay the price."

We find variations of expressions showing value. "'**War is never cheap or easy,**' he [Bush] said" (Gerstenzang and Kempster, "Bush Praises. . ." A1). Saddam is described as extremely mercenary. "British commander . . . Lt. Gen. Peter de La Billiere, took stock this way: . . . 'Saddam Hussein is a man who **uses human life as currency to buy what he wants** in the world'" (Healy and Balzar, "Cheney Hints. . ." A1+). In a way, the idea of "spending" lives takes on an almost lustful connotation, where we are driven to fight and spend lives, but afterward, we loathe the cost. "Americans **are spending lives,**" said Barry P. Bosworth, an economist at the Brookings Institution in Washington. "They're **not spending money**" (Peterson A10); "We have not **spent blood and treasure** destroying the Iraqi military machine just to see it rebuilt, **for hard currency,** by the Soviets" (Krauthammer B7). An editorialist who sees the cost metaphor in a cynical light, writes, "Recently,

top policy-makers have speculated in public about the possible use of nuclear weapons in retaliation against a chemical attack or to spare American lives in what might otherwise be a **costly** ground war, seemingly reducing the choice to one of **cost-benefit analysis**" (Falk M5).

Two others' views the Times included show what they think is received in exchange for the cost. "Civilization is **bought in blood**. We've spilled some of ours, but **we've gotten something for it**. Maybe something important" (Clancy B7). Col. Harry G. Summers' military approach sees it unemotionally: "The **payoff** of all this training was Operation Desert Storm and the blitzkrieg that destroyed Hussein's army" ("Putting Vietnam. . ." A6). The extent of the effect on readers of the cost metaphor is likely to depend on the readers' own involvement in having to "pay the price."

Another common metaphor used by Times writers in their own texts as well as in their quotations from others is language describing war as a game. Certainly the impact of the allies' reliance on sophisticated technological weapons that could kill the Iraqi troops out of close-eyesight range, sometimes even hundreds of miles away, made the allied attacks seem somewhat less hideous than on-the-battlefield color video of the bloody ground troops, burned children, or the bodies photographed in the twisted positions where they had fallen that all the world

could see from the Vietnam War coverage. That the hostile engagements of the Gulf War, as seen on the computer screens, resembled video and computer games, makes the metaphor easy to grasp, but dangerous if its effect softens the reality of the real human deaths that were not shown. Once the need for war has been determined, leaders must find ways to enable the troops to carry out the difficult job. Somehow, their minds must be diverted from cold reality in order to have the strength to do what has to be done. The metaphor of war as a game trivializes war as play and avoids the societal problems at the root of war that would better be solved by language rather than force. George Black exposes how leaders use the game metaphor

War is the most shattering activity in which a society can engage. Nothing else poses such profound questions of morality and mortality. Yet those who mediate our access to this war--the generals and the TV producers--prefer to channel our thoughts into the most trivial metaphors in our culture: the **football field**, the **video game**" (M7).

Many common game metaphors which Times readers understand for ordinary situations are also used for war. A sampling of them include boxing and wrestling matches, wagering, chess, cards, racing, and cock fights. Video and

computer game metaphors are common because of the advanced technological weapons used in the Persian Gulf War. The ideas of playing as in "pretending," daring, and trickery are used as well as the whole structural concept of competition including game rules, teams, coaching, power plays, scoring, winning, and losing.

Metaphors that provide the mildest contrast between game-playing and the reality of dead humans and destruction seem the most harsh and repugnant because of their linkage to play. Yet some soldiers themselves recognize and acknowledge the cynical nature of the metaphor. For instance, "'Everybody needs to stop and think about what they're doing,' said Pfc. Mark Pierson, an Army intelligence specialist. 'They think it's just them up there pushing buttons and such, and think we're the **little toy soldiers** out here'" (Jehl and Murphy, "Consensus. . ." A9). A few days later, Lee May reports how a church pastor explains more fully

Many worried that the glitter of a high technology war, with its computers and videotaped bombing raids, so resembled a **computerized football game** for some people that they fail to see the human losses.

'With technology, the war has become almost like a **sporting event**,' said the Rev. Jack Gloverland, pastor of Unity

Church of Boulder, Colo., adding that 'many people have allowed the excitement and the idea of **winning** . . . to override the more subtle, more truthful emotion of compassion' ("Reality of . . ." A11).

The pastor has complained that the emotion of compassion has been overridden by the idea of winning. His argument goes to the very root of conflict, as he values compassion more highly than winning. But without winning, there would be no game at all.

General Schwarzkopf also was cognizant of the game metaphor but wasn't drawing comfort from it: "'Somebody asked me about [whether] this is more like a **computer game**,' Schwarzkopf added. 'And I said, "Not to me it's not. . . There are human lives involved here, and war is going to kill people"'" (Lauter, "High-Tech. . ." A1).

But the game metaphors are used usually without any analysis of their meaning. Reporter Douglas Jehl writes

Off they slogged into the mud, captains and lieutenants **playing the part** of an Army battalion and looking little different from **a high school football team at midweek practice, pacing off a play they hoped to use in the big game**" ("U.S. Troops. . ." A9).

In the same article, Col. L. C. Riley is interviewed by

Jehl: "'This is our **dive-left, our trap-right,**' he said, accepting the **football coach** metaphor" (A9). Jehl acknowledges the use of the game metaphor, but doesn't comment on it. By his pointing it out, however, readers may sense the paradoxical nature of the metaphor.

Other nations also use the game metaphor: "'The whole of it is like a great **game of chess,**' said Maj. Julian James, chief of staff to the British Army's 4th Brigade. 'You don't really smash in and kill all the forces. You just move around and outmaneuver him and at **the end of the game,** you say: '**checkmate**'" (Jehl and Healy, "'Casualties' . . ." A1+).

The idea is also understood by the Iraqis: "Said antique store owner Tahir [of Baghdad], in a typical comment: 'This is a **game** between Bush and Saddam. It is far above our heads'" (Williams, "Streets Quiet. . ." A1+). The store owner, unlike the previously quoted military figures, feels the war is in the control of others. Readers are likely to get the sense of being spectators, and depending on their cultural approaches toward the war, will accept the use of the game metaphor, or find that it cynically trivializes death and destruction.

Readers may not be aware that most game metaphors are used without calling attention to themselves: "Saddam Hussein attempted to **play his grisly trump card** Thursday

night: a barrage of Scud missiles targeted on Tel Aviv and Haifa but really aimed at touching off another Arab-Israeli war" (McManus, "Iraq Tries. . ." A10); "F-15 pilot Capt. Steve Tate described his dramatic encounter. . .Almost instantly he said, he knew he'd **scored a hit**" (Murphy, "Pilots Relive. . ." A1+); "said Col. Charles Burke. . . 'It's just like **being in the boxing ring. If you can knock him off balance, then you hit him a few more times, he'll go down**'" (Lamb, "Allies Hope. . ." A1+); ". . . said Col. Ralph Cossa, senior fellow at the National Defense University. . .'it is Hussein who **scores points** if Iraq suffers civilian casualties'" (Rosenstiel, "Images of. . ." A1+); and "Having **played his Scud card, his oil-spill card, his oil-field-fires card**, Saddam Hussein has little left **in his hand**" (Krauthammer, "A Cause. . ." B7). Without having to read graphic descriptions of destruction and death, readers can understand how the battle is faring by picturing events in a contest. Use of the game metaphor is a euphemistic approach to what actually happens in war.

While describing war as game may seem inappropriate when deaths result from war, seeing war as entertainment as in the "war is theater" metaphor is equally disquieting. Yet that metaphorical concept is also readily used by military sources, and Times reportage employs it frequently.

Some of the reporters' own terms and their quotes from military experts originate in military tradition as in

"theater of operation," but most of them reveal the theatrical performance comparison embedded in our understanding. Yet the artificiality, or make-believe of theater itself used in war references, adds a cynical edge.

Terms of theater in common use in society but also in war reportage include scenario, curtain raiser, show, behind-the scenes, opening act, parade, sideshow, anticlimax, and like a movie. Others are orchestrate, choreograph, dance, stage, cast, play a role, juggle, take their cues, and jump on the bandwagon. Finally, we find script, rehearsal, spotlight, limelight, and on the spot. Some of these are included in the following citations.

Even before the war began, Robert Hunter described the political situation in terms of theater

Provided that all the **players** in the **Theater of Crisis** now **play their roles--** Saddam Hussein most of all--the struggle in the Persian Gulf can be resolved peacefully. . . by rejecting Bush's letter, Aziz did the prospects of peace a favor . . . This, too, was an important **act of theater--**and of serious diplomacy. It preserved the fiction that any concession Iraq makes is to the United Nations, not to the United States. . .All that is needed now is "plausible deniability" about

linkage.

This can be provided by the honored diplomatic practice of parallelism. Two events occur, seemingly quite independent, and statesmen deny a connection. But with **a wink and a nod**, everyone knows what is happening. . .

In diplomacy, as opposed to war, everyone has to get something. Perhaps allowing Hussein even a crumb will be too much for some people. But if, in exchange, he concedes the central point of complying with U.N. resolutions, it should not matter that war was avoided by resort to **theater** ("The Failure. . ." B7).

Hunter is arguing that if theater's safe-pretending or exploring the "what if. . ." possibilities of actions can lead the audience to prefer peaceful settlement of a conflict, why not use non-violent means? Most writers, however, simply embed the theater metaphor without explanation within their stories.

After the air war began, explaining the aerial combat in terms of planned dance appeared in several articles. Kim Murphy's front page story sets a dramatic tone: "The aerial armada that sped toward Baghdad just after midnight Wednesday **played out a deadly ballet choreographed** to tip

the combat balance in favor of allied forces in the gulf even before the rolling of the first tank. . ." ("Pilots Relive. . ." A1+). Although Murphy describes the attack as "deadly," still calling the air attack a choreographed ballet conjures up in readers' minds images of graceful beauty. Such images glamorize the attacks and ignore the terror and destruction caused by them.

Another theatrical description of the aerial attacks directly compares them to a well known movie: "As the pictures unveiled by U.S. military officials on Friday clearly demonstrate, the development of laser-guided bombs enables U.S. warplanes to drop bombs down the air shafts of command centers, much as **space pilot Luke Skywalker did in the movie 'Star Wars'**" (Fritz and Tumulty, "'Smart Bombs'. . ." A9). Since "Star Wars" was a good-fun movie and no one really got hurt, unlike the realistic film "Platoon", the metaphor trivializes the real death and destruction to the Iraqis. Most American readers who support the war are likely to accept the metaphor without complaint.

Reporter David Lamb describes General Schwarzkopf for readers by comparing him to an accomplished stage actor

For more than an hour he **held center stage, a one-man performer before a rapt audience**

. . . Schwarzkopf, 56, a gruff, amiable ex-paratrooper who looks as though he was born in camouflage fatigues, **gave a**

**performance that would have done justice to James Cagney. . . 'The best is yet to come,'** the general replied and, turning on his heels, **strode off the stage** and back to the war" ("Schwarzkopf . . ." A8).

By picturing Schwarzkopf as a larger-than-life actor who performs before a "rapt audience," then exits dramatically off the stage, the writer has created a hero figure for readers.

But Hussein is also seen in terms of theater: "Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's ability to depict himself as defying allied might is **striking a chord** in the Middle East, **casting him as a hero** in a region where the underdog wins, merely by surviving" (Rosenstiel, "Allies, Iraqis. . ." A1); and "He [Hussein] **dons public masks with an actor's flourish, each with its own wardrobe**--the statesman's European-tailored business suits, the desert leader's flowing tribal jellabas, the commander's drab fatigues and black beret" (Braun and Wilkinson, "What Sort.. ." A1). Hussein is pictured more as a clever, deceptive performer than as a hero.

Meanwhile, an Army Officer, as eyewitness to allied firepower while safe himself, saw a theatrical spectacle: "He [Army Capt. Mike Wilbur] had lit up a cigarette and sat **back to listen to the Righteous Brothers** when suddenly the sky was aflame. . . 'It was the **Fourth of July to music,**' Wilbur said of the artillery **show**, pyrotechnics against a jet-black **backdrop**--and accompanied by warplanes streaking

home from Iraq. 'All I needed was a beer'" (Jehl, "After Sunset. . ." (A6).

If these theatrical comparisons seem cynical in their approach to the deadly seriousness of warfare, Howard Rosenberg, television critic, claims that observers want the thrill of all the action, that war makes exciting entertainment. He explains: "We profess to hate war. But who are we kidding? We love it, at least as it's frequently presented on television, as a romantic abstraction. . . We love **war as theater**" ("Will Bloodless. . ." A8). If he is correct in his assessment of television viewers, then it is no wonder that serious newswriters might employ the theater metaphor in otherwise plainly written narratives to increase interest and understanding.

Ralph Vartabedian points out the macabre military names for personnel-destroying weapons: "They sound like a **cast of cartoon characters**: Adam, Beehive and Bouncing Betty. Yet they are among the most lethal ordnance ever deployed in battle" ("Ordnance. . ." A1). Readers may not sense the full scope of damage to humans caused by these almost humorous names.

Both sides in the conflict are accused of theatrical tactics: ". . . reports from the U.S. press pool in Saudi Arabia are carefully **stage-managed** by Pentagon officials" (Bethell, "The Public. . ." B5), and "On the political front, Hussein may **dramatize** civilian deaths in Iraq in an

effort to sway public opinion. . ." (Broder, "Massive. . ." A1+). These reports suggest that the "pretend" quality of theater is likely to incite distrust among readers concerning news from both the Pentagon and Hussein.

But a graphic description, which also could be a sexual metaphor, dispels the frivolity of theater

. . . British Army Col. Barry Stevens, said earlier this week that military burial groups were working in the battlefield. But when asked whether mass graves were being dug or if bodies were being counted as they were buried, he grew testy. . . 'I am not here to discuss the **pornography of war**,' he said (Gerstenzang, "Tens of. . ." A8+).

Readers will understand the burial of enemy soldiers as a duty, but the reality of mutilated and rotting bodies is as revolting to one's sense of respect for human dignity as are the excesses of sex portrayed in pornography.

At the end of the ground war, the Middle East political situation is still being presented in theatrical terms

The United States has a **leading role to play** in creating a stable regional order, but it no longer enjoys the luxury of **hogging center stage**. Through their contributions, their forbearance and

their sacrifices, Europeans, Arabs, Israelis, Turks and even Iranians have all earned a **voice** in giving shape to regional order (Norton, M1+).

While the idea of theater as a way of describing war carries the nuance of human superficial pretense, the next idea of war as a machine dehumanizes death as it looks at war by measurement of force against force.

A metaphor in common use for the troops, equipment, weapons, leaders, and strategies of any country or coalition of countries is the all-inclusive term, "war machine." From this grand scope all the way down to the least important foot soldier, military language has been structured into euphemisms to use words and their meanings as part of the war machine. This means that military strategists carefully design military terminology to avoid words that call attention to human injury, suffering, or death caused by warfare, and substitute words like "collateral damage" to describe civilians and non-military targets hit in attacks, and "casualties" to describe injuries or deaths. "Casualties" sounds like something happenstance or minor in importance. Air raids are "strikes" or "sorties." Weapons designed to maim and kill soldiers are "anti-personnel weapons." A battle is an "engagement." An attack is a "mission." Accidentally killing our own is "friendly fire." Flattening acres of

enemy territory with air strikes is "carpet bombing." All these are part of a "machine," and a machine doesn't bleed or suffer, is hard, cold, repairable, unemotional, expendable, and a machine is just a tool.

If the goal is to win, then even language is a weapon. If those both in the fray and on the sidelines are to have the mental strength to carry out the warfare deemed necessary, then armies will avoid language that calls attention to individual suffering and concentrate on language that dehumanizes and turns descriptions of the actions that must be taken into unemotional parts of a machine. If one doesn't think of the flesh of the people inside who are also killed, it is not so hard to "kill a tank," a military expression used to describe an attack's effectiveness. Reporters and those they quote readily use the machine metaphor. That this "war is a machine" metaphor enables soldiers to kill enemy troops who, in turn, may be trying to kill them, is plain. That the killing may seem like atrocities to readers but be acceptable to military persons is understandable if one sees that the troops are operating under the "war is a machine" concept. Pitting humankind's instinct to survive against the tragic realities of warfare provides a conceptual paradox that has spawned violent themes for centuries in world literature. No wonder reporters fretted over being limited mostly in their news-gathering to

closely-monitored press-pools and official military press-conferences where the "war is a machine" approach could be somewhat controlled. Other reportage gathered directly from the troops had to be cleared by military censors before it could be released, and yet, when we understand that the power of language is also a weapon, we can see why the allied leaders felt such control was necessary. Turning a human "them" into an impersonal "it" helps do that job. In addition, the "war is a machine" metaphor efficiently explains economic gains and losses. The value of equipment can be measured, but the value of human life cannot.

Colman McCarthy talks about the dehumanizing effect of such language

Instead of Dr. Seuss at bedtime,  
comfort them [children] with Dr. Strangelove,  
currently **played** by Colin Powell. Explain  
that when the general says he will 'kill **it**,'  
he doesn't really mean ordering the slaughter  
of Iraqi human beings, only the **Iraqi 'army.'**  
He's killing an '**it**,' as he says, not a 'them.'  
An '**it**' doesn't bleed or moan when bombed  
by U.S. pilots, no loved ones grieve at home  
(B7).

Broder reports that the highest ranking,  
decision-making leaders of the U.S. forces understand and

speak of the enemy troops in terms of a machine.

"Successful as they believe the first week has been, Defense Secretary Dick Cheney and Gen. Colin L. Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, on Wednesday conceded that Hussein remains firmly in charge of a vast and **well-equipped killing machine**" ("Iraqi Leader. . ." A6).

And the "war is a machine" metaphor continues on down to the troops: "Some of the biggest worries center on the impact of weeks of sand on Apache and Cobra helicopters. These aircraft would play an integral role in a land war by **killing Iraqi tanks** with their TOW missiles. . ." (Frantz, "Allies'. . ." A5).

Another way to dehumanize killing is to personify, or humanize, the machines as the enemy and kill them. David Lamb tells how Lt. Col. Billy Diehl, commander of an F-16 squadron, describes the enemy: "'. . . We don't want to be here a day longer than we have to, but we don't want them to roll in there **with all the defenses and all the artillery and the tanks they still have alive**'" ("Allied Planes. . ." A1+).

If the writer employs personification, giving the weapons the ability to act on their own by leaving out mention of personnel, then no troops do any killing--just the machinery. Frantz writes of the description of a Warthog pilot: "'I started firing about a mile away,' Swain said. 'Some of the bullets ran through **him**, but we weren't

sure if **it** was stopped completely. So I came back with the final pass, hit **it** and **it fell apart**. . . On the final pass, I shot about 300 bullets at **him**. . . We tried to ID the **helicopter** after we were done and **it** was just in a **bunch of little pieces**, so we can't tell what type **it** was'" ("Pilot Chalks. . ." A7). Here, the pilot quoted slips back and forth between the use of the pronoun "him" for a person and "it" for a machine. The Iraqis also personify machinery. Fineman quotes refugees fleeing to Jordan as they describe allied planes: "'These **brutal planes knew exactly what they were doing**" ("Allies Bombing. . ." A9).

An Army officer calls enemy troops "units," then talks about taking them apart as if they were a machine that could be disassembled. This eases the idea of killing real people. Broder reports: "The allied attacking forces will isolate individual **units**, confront them with superior power at the point of attack and '**dismantle them piece by piece**,' a senior Army officer said" ("War's Climax. . ." A1+). But Healy reports that our own troops are also seen as tools to keep our military machine operating: ". . .[William] Cowan added that the use of the elite military commandos in Iraq also reflects the Pentagon's renewed confidence in Special Operations forces as an effective, **high-precision tool** in the nation's military's **toolbox**" ("Special Forces. . ." A1+). The "war is a machine" metaphor, although used in this case to explain the function of the Special Operations forces,

shows them as an important part that may be needed to keep the entire war enterprise operating. But, in the war machine, everyone is dehumanized.

The "machine" metaphor may assist soldiers in assimilating the training needed to be able to kill the enemy, yet still some sensitivity to the enemy as human beings remains. Balzar reports

'I really feel sorry for them,' said Sgt. Percy Smith from Atlanta. 'I feel like I'm glad that I'm on this side and not on their side. I know they're catching hell'. . . 'Jesus God,' said Cpl. Lee Welverton, of Enterprise, Ala., as howitzers roared and the whump of impacting shells drifted back. 'Jesus God, have pity on their souls. . . You can't help but sometimes remember those are human beings under that firestorm' ("Marines". . .") (A17).

In spite of military training which attempts to turn thinking citizens into non-thinking parts of the war machine, compassion remains in soldiers for their so-called enemy. At the feeling level for soldiers, the enemy is not just a machine, but human, no matter how official military language may describe them. Although metaphor does exert some influence over our attitudes, metaphor is still only

language, a tool to aid our communication. Language alone does not define and limit our cultural belief. Our cultural myth comes from our common histories, and metaphoric language helps us describe events in the light of our myth.

Finally, Times reportage has included Roger Scruton's opinion. He sees the advantage of certain weapons that are really machines that attack only other weapon-machines. Perhaps, if technology can take us that far, humans will no longer have to take the place of machines and be dehumanized in the process. He says, "Let us hope that after the war, Congress will deliberate upon the significance of weapons like the Patriot missile, and perceive the wonderful advantage, both military and moral, of weapons that destroy other weapons, rather than human beings" (B7). If all conflicts really could be settled as verbal argument only, that would be best. Next best, though, would be real machine against real machine, which would leave human lives out of it, like ideas explored in science fiction. The "war is a machine" metaphor would no longer be a metaphor, but would be a statement of fact.

We can see that as we find it necessary to fight back violently against an aggressive enemy, our military and official language detoxifies the most awful horror of warfare by using "game" and "theater" comparisons while dehumanizing the troops by turning war into a "machine,"

in which armor attacks armor. As non-official language is used in non-military reports by reporters and those quoted, however, we find the previously described paradoxical heart and blood metaphors used that express the human fear of pain and death.

The Times' reports on military briefings and quotations from military personnel, while using the "war is a machine" metaphor, reflects the government's position of using language that will enable the reading public to know what is going on, yet not inflame the readers with graphic descriptions of violence. These could produce "weapons of words" in our midst. If the public is shocked by descriptions of hideous human carnage caused by our own troops, the public may insist that the war be halted. This disunity might lend an advantage to the enemy.

The Times gives as much coverage as it can to divergent mythical perspectives on the war. In spite of the tight control of official news available to reporters, locally written stories about people's reactions to the war and editorial comments both for and against the Gulf conflict are printed.

In the next section, we will move further outward in our Diagram (p.42) to address metaphors that relate to the world outside ourselves and our homes, the world of politics.

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## Political Metaphors

The world of political ideas, although usually secondary to the living processes of our bodies and the maintaining of life in the shelter of homes and daily interaction with others, may, in fact, be elevated to primary importance. The mind can overrule the body if it places enough importance on the need for effecting power over others, which may explain how factions of the human race can ever resort to physical warfare in the first place. We have seen in this paper how language, its meanings, its mode of expression, and its interpretation manifests power over us as it affects the approach to the way we live our lives.

Language used to describe the political forces leading to war has its roots in conflicting cultural myths, which will be discussed in Chapter 3. This section will examine how political news may become propaganda. If politics is the policies and affairs of a government, then inherent in the politics of any country will be the acting out of the cultural beliefs of the people and leaders of that country. As political leaders promote their policies and actions, their way of expression is known as propaganda. We will note how the Times deals with propaganda in outright discussion in reportage of people's expectations and government's needs.

When power groups resort to deliberate manipulation of language to achieve certain effects on the population, this becomes blatant propaganda. Some may argue that all power groups use propaganda to a degree. While no reputable American newspaper would set out deliberately to blast blatant propaganda at its readers, some may think they see propaganda even in the pages of the generally respected Times. This can happen if the reader's cultural myth collides with what the Times thinks is news that must be reported. If we read an account of an occurrence that we don't want to know about or that we feel shouldn't be exposed as news, we could see that as propaganda-- promoting an unpopular idea. Or, the Times could quote the rather radical opinion of a person with whom a reader seriously disagrees. Or the Times can present in its editorial section the divergent arguments from all sides of an issue, and if readers are not open minded enough to consider the position of others with whom they disagree, those editorial opinions may be seen as propaganda.

But propaganda, of concern to serious readers, is distortion of facts by deliberately withholding key information, playing up or down certain details of a situation so that a scene is out of proportion by using euphemisms or understatement, or by deliberately telling readers what the power structure wants them to think as if everyone agrees and there is no other way to think. Who

then, if propoganda exists in the pages of the Times, is guilty of such tactics?

The Times ran several articles which dealt with the role of the press in Gulf War reporting which may give some clues. While the Times did not obviously state its position on the role of the press, it demonstrated its position by its willingness to run the dialectic about its role. Many people, such as Chomsky, assume that the press should be objective and report events plainly so that the public may understand them, but we know that this is impossible if we accept Barthes' idea of myth. So what are the constraints faced by the Times as it tries to report on an event as large as the Persian Gulf War?

Editorialist Amos A. Jordan acknowledges the conflict between press and government: "To some soldiers, the press seems a nuisance in wartime. But the quest for public support of the Bush administration's objectives in the Gulf is as important as the military's drive and valor on the battlefield" (M5). Jordan's remarks suggest that the press itself can give or take away support from the Bush administration's goals. He does not explain if absence of news hinders or helps the administration.

Although Rick DuBrow is writing of censorship of television, the following remarks can apply to the press, and he adds the idea that public opinion can also cause pressure on the press to support the public myth.

He writes

"At another time, in another war, the saying was, '**Loose lips sink ships.**' Now everybody has **loose lips**, and what they say is transmitted around the world instantly. And the public is **behind** the new TV-war restrictions. . .The truth, of course, is neutral. But not in a war. Especially a popular one" ("Is It TV's. . ." A8+).

We might conclude from DuBrow's opinion, that in time of a popular war, the less the public knows about all the facts of the war, the better it is for the chances of winning, for bad news might turn off public support. People will also interpret news to support their beliefs. Marvin Kalb adds another view: "The **sainted** Walter Lippman . . . wrote 'that in time of war what is said on the enemy's side of the front is always **propaganda** and what is said on our side of the front is truth and **righteousness**'" ("Live From . . ." B7).

Two letters to the editor on the same day illustrate Lippman's quote by showing contrasting opinions of the news media's role in reporting bombing of the bunker in Baghdad

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Author's note: All types of metaphors will be **highlighted** as they appear in the quotations used in the remainder of the political section of this study.

where civilians were killed. The first writer's mythical perception sees the event as a cynical propaganda ploy by Hussein, and the second writer sees only the U.S. as slaughterers of the innocent. Tom Wagner of Buena Park says

May we wonder when the networks will question why the civilians were **herded** into a military facility; who ordered their placement (death--let's call it what it is); who benefits from the deaths and how is that benefit obtained? May we wonder, does one cry out in anguish on the occasion of a child's death, in whole declarative sentences with good vocabulary and correct syntax in a foreign language?

I see no reason to be surprised at Saddam's use of his own civilians, or the civilians of other countries, as **human shields** and indiscriminate **targets**. He's done it before. He continues to target Scud missiles against the civilians of both enemy and non-combatant countries. My surprise is at media gullibility. I'd always thought reporters and

editors had a more rounded education, questioned their sources more carefully and reported the news more accurately" ("Letters to. . ." B6).

Phyllis De Joseph of Rancho Cucamonga offers an alternate opinion

I felt a **sickening** sense of horror as I watched the newscast showing the bombed out bunker where hundreds of old men, women and children who sought shelter from our bombing raids in Baghdad were killed or wounded. I saw the relatives weeping and crying out their terrible grief over the **loss** of their loved ones. . . I feel the anger of these innocent people in a distant land directed towards the policies of our government. Americans need to know the truth concerning these policies. We need more in-depth reporting by a media that is not controlled by the people responsible for such policies" ("Letters to. . ." B6).

In addition to its staff of reporters and editorial writers, the Times occasionally prints viewpoints from

controversial public figures. For instance, it includes contrasting arguments from conservative politician Patrick Buchanan and a CNN representative. Buchanan argues that in war, the press is a legitimate weapon and must support the country, while CNN, when criticized for keeping Peter Arnett in Baghdad at the disposal of the Iraqis, argues that their job is to report the news as world events and not to support a side. Buchanan states

Is it the duty of American reporters in wartime to be neutral and objective, or to be on the side of the U.S.? If the former, we are in trouble. For in wartime Americans do not want objectivity or neutrality. They believe that, once U.S. soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines are committed to battle, every American, be he journalist, janitor or jailbird, should **back** the troops ("Is CNN. . ." M7).

Readers have been given two opinions and must decide for themselves.

So far we have observed American writers discussing how objective the American press is or should be. But when it comes to news from Iraq, we find the Iraqi press has no autonomy at all from the Iraqi government. Times staff reporter Fineman writes

. . .the state-run station now renamed **Mother of Battles** Radio, reported Sunday that Syria had turned over to U.S. officials in Damascus seven American pilots who had been shot down during allied air **strikes** on Iraq but somehow made their way into Syrian territory.

Both reports were not only untrue, but further removed from reality than Baghdad Radio has been since the start of the Gulf War 19 days ago, analysts said ("On Baghdad. . ." A9).

The Times falls short of labeling Iraqi news propaganda, but goes so far as to call it untrue. Here, Fineman identifies a false story deliberately planted by official Iraqi sources to mislead its public. Other articles quote the dispatches from Iraq, but the next one explains how biased quotations from the public are likely to be

Baghdad Radio--Exhorting Iraqis to relish their 'victory,' the regime's announcer declared: 'The [Republican] Guards have **broken the backbone** of their aggressors and thrown them beyond the borders. Let us celebrate the **epic** of the brave Republican Guard, who protected Iraq and preserved its great

power.'

. . . 'He's now making his case to his people to prepare them for the battlefield reports they're bound to hear when the bodies and prisoners start coming back,' said one Western diplomat who was based in Baghdad until late last year. 'But more importantly, he's telling his people he's still in charge, which means they better accept his version of events or else.'

. . . Most interviews in Baghdad's streets or marketplaces are closely watched by civilian agents, whose mere presence produces comments from shopkeepers or shoppers that are consistent with the prevailing line of the ruling regime (Fineman, "Iraqi Radio. . ." A8).

Not only do Iraqi officials create the news to try to manipulate Iraqi public opinion, but they also apparently have the public afraid to say anything about the war but politically safe parroting of the government's pronouncements.

Another account of Baghdad Radio's transmission is covered by Tracy Wilkinson and John Brody

Iraq insisted that the ground offensive

'so far has totally failed' and asserted that the allied forces were **'wading in their own blood'** at Iraq's defensive positions in an around Kuwait. Declaring that the Iraqi forces have already won, Baghdad Radio said, 'Victory is sweet' ("Allies Push. . ." A1+).

The American public could read for themselves in the Times and see on television news that the opposite was being reported. For the Times to have been able to report a more balanced picture of what was actually going on inside Iraq, reporters would have to have been allowed in, but in a country where there is no such thing as a free press, that was prohibited. The Times did the next best thing by reporting on news transmissions from Iraq and then explaining their doubtful authenticity.

On the other hand, we find the Times also exposes American efforts at manipulating opinion. Alan C. Miller writes

Rep. Lee H. Hamilton (D-Ind.), chairman of the House Foreign Affairs subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, stated, 'When we personalize the conflict, we undercut our goals of **characterizing** the conflict as one between Iraqi aggression and the

world community. . . Targeting Saddam would help him **portray** himself throughout the Arab world as a **martyr** who has **single-handedly** taken on the world'

("The Risk. . ." A1+).

A careful reader of Hamilton's remarks that the Times chose to print will discover that the congressman is deliberately against personalizing the war because that will affect how readers think about it. He uses theatrical terms to explain this. But the question is, why would Hamilton think he should determine how the public characterizes the war? In addition, the idea of not targeting Saddam so that he might not become a martyr, would seem to place propaganda value above lives.

True to the idea that propaganda is a weapon, General Schwarzkopf even reveals that the military deliberately misled reporters so that their articles would confuse the Iraqis

Schwarzkopf, the commander of the allied forces, exuded satisfaction at apparently having fooled the Iraqis into expecting a frontal offensive over the Saudi-Kuwaiti border. And he teased the press for its inadvertent **role** in it. Information on a fake amphibious landing, Imminent **Thunder**, was **leaked** to reporters

--and extensively reported on--to make the Iraqis fortify their positions on the eastern shores of Kuwait. . . In fact, the brunt of the allied offensive would come on the far-western **flank** (Wilkinson, "Schwarzkopf. . ." A6).

This situation is quite ironic. If the military leaked the information about the location of the coming attack and the press reported extensively on the false information, this shows that the military may have been clever as far as its own goals were concerned by carefully monitoring the press' access to strategic information. The leaks did serve the allies as an effective weapon by causing the Iraqis to expect a frontal attack along the Saudi-Kuwaiti border and an attack from the east along the Gulf. If the press all during the conflict had been allowed easy access to sensitive strategies and had readily published that information, the American readers could have better formed their assessments of the government's actions, but then the Iraqi resistance could have been more effective. More allies' lives may have been lost. In war, a press that reveals military strategies may indeed be seen by some as an enemy.

Although war is not argument with language but with force, when news story language affects public support of war, we can see how the government would want to censor

news. The problem with censorship and manipulation of information by the military is that it raises concern about what crucial information is being withheld that the public should know, for why should the public trust military leaders to be acting in their best interest? Further, the people's need for accurate information is the basis for keeping government officials responsive to the public's wishes. Where war is concerned, the First Amendment to the Constitution which guarantees freedom of the press is sidestepped by labeling information classified. A loophole in the public's right to information exists here that provides a potential for abuse by allowing the hiding of errors and illegal activities in classified information. The more readers understand how and why manipulation of news works, the less they will tolerate distortion of information. The Times works under the constraints of government news censorship as well as knowledge of their power to endanger American troops by revealing American military strategies so that the enemy may take more effective action. This affects the quantity and quality of what and how news is written.

The military has also traditionally used understatement or euphemism to soften the seriousness of a situation. The Times merely reports the statements of military officials. For example, ". . .a Pentagon official, who declined to be identified, said that Iraqi

soldiers certainly have been "**hurt**" by heavy bombardment. But the official added: '**Hurt's** a relative thing. We've **degraded** him, but we haven't stopped him'" (Kennedy and Murphy, "U.S. Jets. . ." A1+). In printing the understatement within quotations, the Times allows the readers to respond to the information according to their own myth.

Bob Drogin's own reportage uses dramatic terms to describe rocket attacks on the Iraqis, but he exposes the euphemistic military terms for the effects of the attacks

American troops call it '**steel rain**'.

The Iraqis probably call it **hell**.

For the past week, U.S. artillery batteries have launched hundreds of **shrieking**, fiery rockets at enemy positions in southern Iraq. Each 12-foot rocket explodes into a deadly **shower** of 644 bomblets, each of which then shatters into 600 pieces of shapnel that rip into artillery, buildings and '**soft targets**,' military-speak for human beings.

'I prefer not to say we are killing other people,' said Capt. Richard Nichols, commander of Bravo Battery, 6th Field Artillery. 'I prefer to say

we are **servicing a target**' ("Rockets. . ."

A6).

Drogin's irony illustrates for readers the contrast of the harshness of what actually happened with how the military described it.

Reporter Edwin Chen shows how the military also uses euphemisms for our own soldiers

Among the toughest decisions facing these doctors and nurses will be when to send a patient to the ward designated '**expectant**'--meaning expected to die. . . 'These soldiers will die no matter what we do, and they are given painkillers and made comfortable,' said Lt. Col. James Startzell, deputy commander of the hospital's clinical services ("At Front. . ." A7+).

"Expectant" sounds so much gentler than "hopeless," "fatal," or "terminal." While Chen has not pointed out the euphemistic quality of "expectant," readers have been informed and may interpret its meaning according to their own myth.

We have seen the use of propaganda within quotations from both sides in Times reportage of the war. Whether the Times itself can be accused of using propaganda will depend on readers' own myths and expectations of what and how the

Times should cover events. It does report on both Iraqi and American military use of propaganda, and it reveals understatement and euphemism in use in military terminology. It printed criticism of its own reportage in its "Letters to the Times" section. Thorough readers will find that the Times prints articles on many sides of issues to the extent that information is accessible.

From political metaphors, mostly falling into the category of propaganda, we move to our metaphysical and/or spiritual perceptions, and how our ideas of religion and justice appear in Times reportage.

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#### Spiritual and Values Metaphors

Cultural beliefs that involve a god, rules and punishment for violation of those rules, and individual and group responsibility for adherence to the values held in esteem by a culture, are strong themes in a society's myth system. Within the outermost Spiritual and Values circle on the Diagram of Metaphorical Subjects (p. 42) we find the ideas of good versus evil; God and the devil; justice, punishment, and hell; liberty; morality as might be practiced by righteous martyrs; or depravity as might be practiced by barbaric infidels. According to what we find in Times reportage of the Persian Gulf War, both the allies and the Iraqis see themselves as fighting an evil enemy of

God. God [Allah] is on the side of the Iraqis, but God is also on the side of the allies. Both sides see the behavior of the other side as evil, therefore, they reason, the violent actions of warfare are permissible against a heinous enemy. The idea that evil should be combated sooner--or it must be combated later, provides justification for military action. The allies could cite Aristotle's statement, "We make war that we may live in peace," as ancient, infallible wisdom. Hussein calls for a jihad (holy war) against the U.S. as infidels and Bush as the Great Satan while the U.S. compares him to Hitler--a Western embodiment of "evil"--who must be neutralized so that Kuwait may be liberated and the world may move to a peaceful New World Order. Yet, to his followers, Hussein represents a dream of Arab unity and autonomy.

Common religious concepts appearing in the language of both the American and Iraqi public at large and in the reportage include terms such as "hell," "hellfire," "prayer," "God," "savior," "demon," "Satan," "prophetic," "providence," "faith," "infidel," "moral," "good," "evil," "just," and expressions such as "praise the Lord," and "God willing." Most of these references in the Times are used in direct quotations, yet some are found in the reporters' own texts, as examples in this section will show.

Iraq's religious metaphors are usually quoted in the Times as writers select segments of information from Iraqi

government controlled newspapers or Baghdad Radio broadcasts. Since the press in Iraq operates under close government supervision, it represents more a propaganda tool for the leadership than a source of news. The Iraqi press also tells the Iraqi people what positions they are expected to support. For example, David Lauter reports: "It is Bush who wanted the war," announced Iraq's army newspaper, Al Qaddissiya. 'But let him know that the **furnace of hell** will be open to the Americans and to the allies when they come'" ("U.S., Iraq. . ." Al). Readers will understand from Iraq both moral condemnation as well as the threat of hideous, violent punishment. Others add analysis to the information released from Iraq: "But with the outbreak of war, some now sense an almost **messianic** tone--particularly in his [Hussein's] speech after Thursday's first wave of allied bombing raids, with its images of President Bush as **Satan** and courageous Iraqis as '**descendents of prophets and believers**'" (Tumulty and Fineman, "Hussein now. . ." Al). The "messianic tone" description of Iraq's pronouncements will be understood by American readers to mean that the Iraqis have set themselves up as spiritually correct and that the Americans are the embodiment of evil. The effect of this is likely to cause American readers to see Hussein as the embodiment of evil and become more convinced that "our cause is just."

Reflecting the American myth, we find a reporter's

analysis of Hussein using similar, yet less dramatic comparisons of him to the devil: "To Americans, Hussein **is both the personification of evil** and an enigma. The rush of events has obscured his motivations; wartime blindness to his complexities has simplified and **demonized** his life" (Braun and Wilkinson, "What Sort. . ." A1). And the Times includes Bush's own words, as he expresses his view of Hussein and his wish that God will protect the allied troops

Bush said, 'Tonight, as this coalition seeks to do that which is **right and just**, I ask only that all of you stop what you are doing and **say a prayer** for all the coalition forces, and especially for our men and women in uniform. . . May **God bless and protect each and every one of them**,' Bush said, 'and **may God bless the United States of America**' (Gerstenzang and Williams, "Ground War. . ." A1).

Another reporter also quotes Bush: "'In these 12 days of thinking over things, I've resolved all the **moral** issues in my own mind. This is a case of **good versus evil**" (Nelson, "Deadline. . ." A1+). Readers, if they believe Bush is sincere, surely will feel a sense of justification for the war effort, for clearly, his words show God must be on our

side. However, for those readers who don't quite subscribe to Bush's brand of religious justification, editorialist Colman McCarthy takes a cynical approach

To show that **God is on our side**, Bush brought in the ultimate in **evangelistic** ground-and-air support, the **Rev. Billy Graham**. Two days after the war began, the **preacher** conducted a Washington **prayer service** for Bush and assorted politicians, generals and admirals. Long a sycophant to White House power, Graham went along with the war hysteria and **blessed** Bush's intervention: 'There comes a time when we have to fight for peace' ("Shh!. . ." B7).

Those readers who dislike Bush and understand satire will probably appreciate McCarthy's remarks, but Bush and Graham supporters will find these remarks sacreligious. By printing both Bush's words and McCarthy's response, the Times offers readers an opportunity to pick the position they prefer.

Another editorialist, Robert E. Hunter, describes Hussein in a most uncomplimentary way: ". . .his failure places him in the ranks of other **false saviors** in the region who have only brought grief to their peoples" ("A Deal. . ." B7). Readers may conclude that Bush's position is shared by others, but Hunter's calling Hussein a "false

savior" may incite a bit of concern for the Iraqi people who have suffered under Hussein's false promises.

Two days later, J. Michael Kennedy reports rah-rah hyperbole from Baghdad Radio, in which the Iraqi broadcasters tell the people that God is on their side

As the Iraqis rolled, Baghdad Radio broadcast a war cry. . . 'O Iraqis! O Arabs! O Muslims who believe in **justice!** Your **faithful** and courageous ground forces have moved to teach the aggressors the lessons they deserve!

They have launched their lightning land attack, bearing high the banner saying **God is great**, and crushed the armies of **atheism** as they advance routing those who could run away while cursing the **infidels and heathens!**

Our forces managed to enter the coastal town of Al Khafji at midnight. Thus **God has given the faith a great victory** with the collapse of the front of **infidelity** on the earth which **God has blessed so it will continue to defend his banner and sing his praises'** ("Allies Battle. . ." Al+).

Although the expressions are a bit different from Bush's,

the religious fervor is just as strong, and Iraqi supporters of Hussein would surely find comfort in it.

By observing quotations from both Bush and Baghdad Radio, Times readers will apply their own reading or mythical application to what has been said. It is unlikely, however, that Baghdad Radio's condemnations of allied forces will engender sympathy for their side, but rather further destroy American sympathy for Hussein's position, while allied news sources condemning Hussein may further alienate the Iraqis from understanding why the coalition is opposing the Iraqi actions.

In addition to the American and Iraqi media, both the allied Arabs and Israelis use religious references that invoke the help of God and condemn Hussein's behavior. Kim Murphy reports on Kuwaiti resistance leaders: "'It has been something incredible. Most of the time, we work without the help of anybody. The only creature with us was God,' said Ahmed Hindi, one of the best known of the resistance leaders" ("Kuwait's Rebels. . ." Al+). Kenneth Freed reports on how the king of Saudi Arabia also feels God is working against Hussein for the benefit of other Arabs

The king [Faud] said he believes that Hussein's rejection of all the U.N. resolutions 'is an **act of providence--ordained by Almighty God--**designed to finish

with Saddam and his untoward principles. . .

I believe that **God has worked out his purpose** to prevent Iraq's hand from reaching out to grab other lands' ("Some Arab. . ." A8).

Williams' report also shows Israeli leader Shamir referring to God: "'Israel has a great interest in the results of the war. We hope the liquidation of the tyranny in Iraq will bring about, **God willing**, an openness on the part of the Arab states for peace with Israel,' he said in comments greeting the allied victory" ("Israelis Fear. . ." A9+). Of course, Israelis, who had been the arch enemy of some Arab states for years, also hope that God will work on their behalf.

Religious metaphors are found throughout the reportage both in the reporters' own texts and those whom they quote. For example, we see a reporter as both reporter and subject as Mark Fineman tells of Bob Simon's return after having been held prisoner by the Iraqis: "'I thank **God** that the four of us are alive,' Simon said in an emotional CBS broadcast. . ." ("Iraq Frees. . ." A8). Tom Bethell says: "War's **hellishness** ought to be brought home to us, if only to encourage prudence in our leaders" ("The Public. . ." B5). Religious references among the troops are common: "'Kuwait is on fire,' said Col. Hal Hornburg, a U.S. Air Force pilot who overflew the emirate. 'Southern Kuwait looks like what **hell** must look like'" (Lamb and Broder,

"Allies Accuse. . ." A1+); or "He [Lt. Col. Scott Linganselter] said the rockets could devastate Iraqi artillery. 'We put a six-pack on an enemy battery location, and we will make that sucker **go to Allah**,' he said" (Drogin, "Rockets. . ." A6); or "Yes, the men at Viper could think about leaving this desert they had come to hate. 'This is the place,' they joked, 'where **God** dumps all the vacuum cleaner bags'" (Balzar, "Forward. . ." A7). Times reportage reveals how widespread is use of religious reference. God is called on for support by several nations in the war. The idea of the ultimate horror and destruction of hell is also understood by all sides and used by troops, reporters, and leaders.

Even though both sides see themselves as right and the enemy as wrong, at least among American troops, some feel compassion for the enemy and invoke the help of God on their behalf: "Army soldiers in one unit deployed along the northern Saudi border have begun to ask for a **prayer** for the enemy during religious services" ("See Corn. . ." H7). Readers may feel more supportive of the war effort if they think American troops are not vicious killers but compassionate toward enemy soldiers.

Among letters from readers to the Times, the editors choose to print opinion pieces representing many perspectives. The comments of letter writer Harry M. Bauer, sees the sides in the war from a more calculating

angle

Nations on all sides of a conflict have always insisted on the **moral excellence of their causes**. It is very presumptuous and arrogant to invoke **God** in this way, and entirely unnecessary. Considering Saddam Hussein's threats of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, his apparent willingness to use them if possible, his extreme cruelty and his intransigence, we may view this war, not necessarily as a **just** or **unjust** nor as **good** or a **bad** war, but simply as a prudent war (B6).

Readers may agree with Bauer's reasoning, that using religion as a moral imperative is unnecessary, that stopping Hussein now even though war is required, will save more lives in the long run.

Reporting on the religious metaphors in use on both sides may make it seem that the Times endorses specific religious views, yet it is more likely that the writers are simply dutifully reflecting the attitudes of those they write about. The ideas of good versus evil explained by the ideas of God versus the devil, and heaven versus hell, seem so fundamental to our ways of knowing that they may be called archetypal and be basic to our humanness.

Because Times writers were restricted from gathering comments from the people inside Iraq, it is impossible to know what amount of them saw the allies as instruments of the devil. That Americans had access to knowledge of Hussein's brutal leadership, no doubt, made it easier for Bush to remain credible as he invoked the help of God for the allies. But the gap between cultural belief systems seems ludicrous when both sides are calling on God, calling their enemies devils, and killing each other in the name of what they perceive as righteous morality. While the Times does not draw this conclusion for us, after thorough reading, one can find opposing views represented enough that there is no choice--readers must draw their own conclusions about the degree of righteousness of the various factions.

In the last section, we move from specific categories of metaphors to other figurative language which is prominently used in the Times. When these figures are identified and considered, we see that they may have unique effects on readers.

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#### Other Figurative Language

Four other types of figurative language are found in Times war reportage that are of particular significance to the Persian Gulf War. Although some of them may have been identified as types of metaphors in earlier portions of this

study (for instance, body parts, animals, colors, etc.), their collective effect in some cases is quite unique and should be identified. They are symbolic language, personification, irony, and metonymy.

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### Symbolic Language

The use of symbolic language in Times reportage often identifies the symbols themselves and tells how they are being used. Most accounts concern Americans, and a few involve allies and the Iraqis.

Flags and the colors in those flags have been known and displayed for centuries as a way of showing allegiance to a group. The display of flags is well understood in the American culture. An account by Patt Morrison about displays at the Super Bowl demonstrates the scope of the influence of symbols to represent patriotism

The way Tom Tornabene had it figured, it was not just a football game that he showed up for Sunday, his ticket in his hand and the **flagpole** from his front porch tipped back **on his shoulder like an M-16.**

This most American of **pageants stood for something. Defiance, maybe. Resolve. Patriotism, even. Like poking a stick in Saddam Hussein's eye.**

. . . From the **national anthem** which even the hot dog vendors sang--to the blowout finish, the Bill's **colors and the nation's --red, white and blue** for both--pooled indistinguishably. . . Locals were exhorted to bring **flags** to the stadium. A pizza chain gave them away free. Over in tunnel A-8, usher Pat Lewis pointed to the upper deck. They had a **flag** so big they had to take it down. It was blocking everybody's view ("Over There. . ." A11).

To the troops, the knowledge that people at home are displaying symbols to express concern and support for their safe return was a real morale builder. Jehl reports

'In my town, our pictures are hung up in Wal-Mart,' said Pfc. Kenneth Eversole, 22, of Hyden, Ky. . . Added Pvt. Edgar Uriarte, 19, of Garfield, N.J.: 'My father told me **flags are flying** in every town and there are **yellow ribbons** everywhere. That really makes me feel good' ("GIs Pleased. . ." A8).

That reporters sought out such reports featuring language about symbols of support for troops and the war effort is likely to encourage readers to get on the band wagon and also support the war. Quoting soldiers personalizes the

allied effort. When a reader knows the name of a 19-year-old soldier who is cheered by the support shown with yellow ribbons and flags, it becomes much harder to be critical of the war effort. These reports definitely promote the American myth in support of the troops.

The Times also prints criticism of both the war effort and the display of symbols in Barbara Ehrenreich's article, "Yellow Ribbons or Yellow Bunker?" She says

But Americans are a strong and noble people, our **yellow ribbons say**, and--yes!--  
**Good must triumph over Evil.**

So why, then, are the **yellow ribbons** beginning to look like a huge **yellow streak down the backbone** of America?

. . . **Ribbons** are fine, of course, and may even help us cope. Only, please, let's stop covering our nation in a coward's **color**. The **ribbons** should be **black** (B7).

Ehrenreich uses the yellow ribbons satirically, for rather than representing support for soldiers, she argues that they represent cowardice, another symbolic meaning for yellow. When she says the ribbons should be black, the reader will understand black as absence of right and good and will sense her bitterness about the war. By using symbolic colors, she shows dissatisfaction with America's

handling of the Persian Gulf crisis.

Other symbolic actions combined with symbols are described by Scott Harris and Larry Gordon

Symbols **dramatized** the human cost of war.

Protesters employed **body bags** in

demonstrations in Boston, Philadelphia and

Pittsburgh. In Los Angeles, nine activists

**poured 40 gallons of oil and two pints of**

**blood** on the marble steps of the downtown

**federal building** and then waited for

arrest. Demonstrators found it ironic when

maintenance workers **poured sand** on the

steps **to soak up the blood and oil** (A17+).

These symbols are easily understood by readers so that the reporters found it unnecessary to explain their meanings.

Because of the economic value of oil from the Middle East, the United States was willing to spend the lives of

American soldiers. The cost is represented by the blood

shed by American soldiers from injuries and death, and the

"body bags," of course, represent the return home for burial

of dead soldiers. The expression harks back to the loss of

life in the Vietnam War. Readers will understand that the

protesters are against having soldiers die for oil.

Another writer, Susan Christian, reports on

how "a new generation is embracing the **dusty badge** of

idealism. . . 'Basically, we have an anti-war crowd on

Melrose,' Gorilla [shop owner's nickname] said. 'A lot of them are draft age. This is their first war, and if a **peace-sign button** can ward it off, they'll buy it. It's like **voodoo**'" ("Return . . ." (E1). Here, readers will recognize protest in the "peace sign buttons," previously used during the Vietnam War. The "voodoo" reference may be understood as magic. If the buttons helped then, they may help now.

Moving from the visual symbols to show political position, we find that names of fierce animals, peoples, war weapons, or natural phenomena are used by the American military to suggest aggressive power so that even the names may intimidate the enemy and bolster the courage of the American troops. The Times must incorporate these names in news stories since they are proper nouns, and by doing so, inadvertently support the military's use of the power of these symbols. We find **Apache** and **Cobra** helicopters; **Tomahawk**, **Hawk**, **Lance**, **Hellfire**, and **Maverick** missiles; **Strike Eagles**, **Warthog**, and **Thunderbolt** fighter aircraft; and terms such as **hawkish** for warlike and **dovish** for non-combative.

Other symbols are also readily understood and employed by the troops: "The men at **Viper** [forward operation base], dirty and tired from a relentless drive across southern Iraq **thrust their fists in the air** and cheered" (Balzar, "Forward U.S. . ." A7). The fist, readers will understand,

represents resolve, willingness to fight. In another, "The GIs were laden with ammunition, grenades and mortar rounds. Many of them **waved the American flag**. Others **flashed the 'V for victory'** sign. . . Another chimed in: **'Purple heart'**-- the military award given to those wounded in battle. A third infantryman called the unpaved path **'highway to hell'**" (Chen, "For Troops. . ." A8). All of the bold print items in Chen's writing show his cognizance of the meaning of the symbols, and by reading them together, readers will get a sense of the attitude of the troops as they move forward.

Other colors are commonly used: At Monesson High School, one of the **yellow ribbons** on display for graduates in the Gulf was changed to **black** to commemorate Anthony Madison" (Miller, "Pennsylvania. . ." A22). Madison's death is illustrated by the display of black ribbons. And a veteran spoke of the clarity of meaning using colors: "Bill Rutledge, a 43-year-old Vietnam veteran turned away from the [TV] set and said that he was glad that 'we had the backing in this war that we didn't have in Vietnam. That was **gray--this is black and white'**" (Braun, "Promise . . ." A22). "Gray" means undecided while "black and white" means clear, decisive. Readers will understand that Vietnam didn't have decisive support, but the Gulf War has all the ambiguities cleared up and the country is not holding back support from the military's efforts against Iraq.

The symbolic white as well as raised arms both are

universally understood and indicate surrender. "'It's been a pretty brisk fight. But they [Iraqi troops] have been coming out **waving white flags** and one of them said: 'We're happy to give up, but we had to make a token fight first,' said Col. John Sylvester" (Gerstenzang and Williams, "Ground War. . ." A1+). When we see that the Iraqi troops wave white flags to show surrender, the readers are likely to feel a bit of compassion for them, for no longer are they just part of Iraq's war machine; now they are trying to communicate in a way we can understand, and they are no longer a threat. In another account, we read that

Neal [Marine Brig. Gen. Richard I.] said that while the U.S. command has no firm assessment of the Iraqi forces' will to resist, he cited one incident that might provide a clue: An unarmed allied F-18D forward control airplane aimed its **nose** at some front-line Iraqi troops and they **raised their arms in surrender** (Kennedy and Healy, "Iraqis Torch. . ." A1+).

Other countries use symbols as well: "'**Blood for Freedom: Welcome Allied Forces,**' read a banner draped over the main highway into Kuwait" (Murphy and Drogin, "Crowds Cheer. . ." A1). Readers will sense the commitment of the Kuwaitis and possibly sense a comparison of the liberation of Kuwait from Iraq to the liberation of America from the

British because of the Revolutionary War.

A bit of news from the Iraqi civilians also shows their use of the color black for mourning and death. "Outside the mosque [in Bahgdad], the walls were bedecked with five **black banners** with white script in mourning for soldiers and civilians killed in the Gulf War" (Holmes, "Mourners, Shoppers. . ." A6). American readers, recognizing the symbols of black for mourning and blood for war dead are likely to feel some kinship both with allies and Iraqis. Symbols are easy to understand even though language may be different.

Most of the previous examples of symbolism have been in quotations, but occasionally, Times' writers will use symbols in their own texts, as does Nick B. Williams: "When Saddam Hussein **wrapped himself in the flag** of Palestinian nationalism in the first weeks of its occupation, the streets of Amman **flowered** with pro-Husseini posters" ("Jordan Striving. . ." A9). William's language suggests that Hussein, who "wrapped himself in the flag," deliberately played-up to the Palestinians, knowing their desire for a homeland, and they feel for his professed concern for them by posting his picture everywhere, much as many flowers springing up represent the new life and promise of spring.

Some symbols are unique to particular countries, such as the United States' use of yellow ribbons to indicate support for the troops, but many symbols, such as black for

mourning, are found on both sides. Each side uses symbols to represent its own cause or position, and some of these symbols are the same or similar.

While symbols represent something else as a means of comparison, personification represents another thing by giving it the characteristics of a living creature. In the next section we will examine how personification is used in Times reportage.

\* \* \*

#### Personification

As an example of figurative language in this study, personification incorporates some of the other metaphorical concepts already discussed, yet calling attention to some of the special qualities of personification in Times Gulf War reportage is worthwhile, for it has a power all its own.

In the expression, "the arms will speak," we are saying that weapons can use language. We have expressed the idea that human speaking has failed, and now arms must express the intent of the sides in a dispute. Weapons take over when human language fails. Healy and Balzar report, "In France, President Mitterand. . .told the French people that efforts to maintain peace had failed and that '**the arms will speak**'" ("Cheney Hints. . ." A1+).

Almost any force that can be a factor in war may, in an effort to explain its influence, be given human

characteristics: "**Truth** is the first casualty, people always say gloomily at the prospect of war. True enough (though even at the best of times **truth hobbles around with its leg in a cast**). . ." (Cockburn, "Sifting for. . ." B7). By taking an abstract idea such as truth, personifying it, then giving it an injury, readers can understand an abstract idea in a concrete way.

James Gerstenzang's article gives life to a peace proposal: "'This matter is too sensitive to negotiate in public,' said State Department Spokesperson Margaret Tutwiler. 'The surest **way to kill something like this** is to talk about the details and **let people take shots at them**'" ("Soviet Peace. . ." A1+). Readers will understand the peace proposal as a delicate, living thing that must be protected so that it may develop to maturity.

Geographical locations may be personified: "Some of the bombardment was concentrated on Iraqi **minefields lying in wait** for allied troops to cross the border" (Kennedy and Broder, "Tide of Arms. . ." A1+); and "The thousands of American soldiers here sometimes seem **swallowed up by the yawning emptiness of the northern Saudi desert**" (Jehl, "To Troops. . ." A8). The personification of minefields and the desert gives them the power to destroy American troops even though enemy soldiers are not present. This heightens readers' understanding of the danger the soldiers face.

In another example, we read, "Thus, the area's

**port-city swagger has given way to cautious tiptoeing**

through an emotional maze of neighborly concern, resolve to win the war and a fear that a protracted struggle in the Gulf will profoundly diminish the quality of life here, economically and socially" (May, "Navy Ships. . ." A9). The port-city may seem like a drunken sailor once loud and bragging, who has become quiet and considerate now, because it cares about the soldiers and needs their economic support.

Although the "war is a machine" metaphor was discussed earlier in this paper, the following four examples each help show the variety of human abilities inanimate objects may be given. A bus can open fire: "'The first **bus seemed to accept** what was going on without a problem, but the **second bus**, all of a sudden **opened fire** on U.S. troops,' he said. 'Fortunately their aim wasn't too good and they **paid the price**'" (Wilkinson, "2 Americans. . ." A1+). Since we are talking about buses, may we now assume that only the buses pay the price and not the people inside them? Personification allows for killing the buses but cushions the soldier against killing people. A ship can do what humans can: "The \$1-billion-guided missile cruiser Princeton **limped back** under tow to a Persian Gulf port for inspection Tuesday" (Kennedy, "Allied Aircraft. . ." A1+). Readers easily understand that a limping ship is disabled. Bombs can have intelligence: "**Smart bombs** are

aerodynamically designed 2,000-pound bombs bearing miniature computers and television cameras that guide them to their targets with great accuracy" ("Smart Bombs" A9). Calling bombs "smart" is likely to take away fear of them and replace it with respect, for readers admire intelligence. Jets have emotion and will: ". . .the narrow, **keening jets fling themselves** into the glaze-white sky" (Morrison, "Flying Was. . ." A1+). Jets who "keen" and who "fling themselves" sound like machines with consciences, who regret what they must do. The pilots inside are out of readers' minds entirely. The scene takes on a fictional quality.

Personification lends an emotional urgency to what really are ideas or things. This emotional urgency may affect readers by evoking sympathy for the object as in a "limping ship" or a "keening" jet. But it may also promote fear or apprehension, as in a desert that can swallow up people or a bus that can shoot. How can a reader fail to respect a bomb that is smart? Personification of an object may have subtle powers of its own if used by a skillful reporter to evoke in readers an emotional or sympathetic response. However, the next figurative tool, rather than intensifying the effect of a thing or idea, may show its flaws and thereby make it subject to criticism.

\* \* \*

## Irony

The rhetorical tool irony is dealt with plainly in Times stories as reporters reveal the odd juxtapositions of conflicting ideals. Often reporters even identify the irony in their reportage. Each of the following five examples exposes ideological inconsistencies that, although they are dealt with as news and quote spokespeople who give most of the opinion about the problem, raise serious philosophical questions.

We begin with the subject of religion

**Praying for those who bear arms:** It is a practice as old as time itself, but the irony is always fresh. Throughout the country, people in religious services confronted the contradiction of war and religion, many torn between their spiritual inclination to press for peace and their natural desire to wish the best for those fighting in the Middle East (May, "Reality of. . ." A19).

Thoughtful readers will recognize the conflict between the Biblical commandment "Thou shalt not kill" and praying for the safety of American soldiers whose job it is to kill the enemy.

Next, Daniel Weintraub writes of the problem of gender equality in the Middle East

Patricia Ireland, NOW's executive vice president. . . pointed out that U.S. soldiers are being asked to rescue and defend male-dominated Arab governments and societies--in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia--whose discrimination against women represents a form of 'gender apartheid.' She said it is a 'tragic irony' that women, albeit in support roles, were part of such a force and were being instructed not to offend the sensibilities of their Arab hosts ("NOW Opposes. . ." A-26).

Another ironic twist may be whether the war causes human rights' violations in other countries.

Former Judge Robert H. Bork brands any suggestion that the Gulf conflict has given rise to widespread civil liberties violations as 'nonsense.' 'Those groups have gotten themselves to the point where things previously regarded as legitimate no longer are,' Bork says. 'What's expanding is their notion of what civil rights are' (Miller and Ostrow, "Some

Fear. . ." A9).

In this example, by quoting a prominent judge, the Times draws attention to the irony of civil rights groups expanding what they think is needed beyond the rights that people actually want.

Kennedy and Broder write of the duplicity of Iraqi propaganda: "But at the Pentagon, U.S. military officials said they have evidence that in another instance, the Iraqis damaged one of their own buildings so they could blame allied bombing. One official said it was a mosque in the city of Basra" ("Tide of. . ." A1). The Iraqis had indignantly blamed the U.S. for deliberately destroying their sacred religious sites, yet they do it themselves, blaming the U.S. Apparently the religious sites make good propaganda tools.

The most powerful example of irony is the idea that the Iraqi army is the enemy that should be killed and not the leader of that army, Saddam Hussein himself. Laurie Becklund reports after having spoken to Iraqi-Americans

The painful irony for these Iraqi-Americans is that, once the U.S. government did turn on Hussein, it was not the Iraqi leader who suffered, but their own families. Many have been horrified to hear American generals on television speaking of '**softening up**' Iraqi troops

and inflicting '**collateral damage**' on government buildings and oil refineries and bridges near their relatives' homes.

Many would have been happy to **lose** Hussein and spare their country. Instead, they now feel they may have **lost** their country and Hussein may have been spared ("Iraqi-Americans. . ." A9).

Some of these ironies are so serious that they lend themselves to further comment in the opinion section of the paper, but on this last irony, going after the army rather than Hussein, the Times remained silent although it did cover the Presidential policy which forbids direct attempts on the lives of foreign leaders. Reporting affairs in ironic terms exposes readers to illogical situations which may erode readers' confidence in the ability of leaders to do what is in the best interest of their countries.

By the Times' exposing ironies but not doing opinion pieces on them, readers will form opinions as they will. How irony was expressed in the preceding quote is by the use of metonymy, which we will examine in our last section about figurative language.

\* \* \*

## Metonymy

The figure of speech, metonymy, that adapts names for whole things by using a related name, is widely used by Times reporters themselves and in quotes from American and Iraqi sources. However, metonymy can be dangerously misleading in case of war, if language really can move us to action. For example, we may say we are attacking Hussein rather than the many Iraqi troops, or we may say that Iraq is our enemy, when our enemy is not the whole country but its leader and attacking troops. The latter example shows how hostility toward enemies can be diffused by using names for them that misdirect indignation. Times Persian Gulf War reportage perpetuates the metonymic names for the perpetrators of the invasion of Kuwait by use of age-old speech patterns which often include people and objects not directly to blame.

Metonymy is most commonly used in referring to the enemy by calling it the country's name. Saddam and his military leaders who fire the weapons at the coalition allies are called Iraq, while most of the residents of the country are not and do not want to be involved at all. For instance: "In Washington, Kelly characterized Tuesday as a '**healthy** day of bombing,' contributing to a 90% reduction of **Iraq's ability** to resupply its troops in and around Kuwait" (Kennedy and Healy, "Front Line. . ." A1+). But the

President of the United States has already spoken showing the same way of understanding the enemy: "This suspension of offensive combat operations is contingent upon **Iraq's not firing** upon any coalition forces and **not launching** Scud missiles against any other country" (Bush, "Bush Text. . ." A25). This naming of the whole country as the enemy in place of the true perpetrators of the aggression may serve to ease the apprehension some may have toward destruction of innocent parties within Iraq, for calling the enemy the inclusive term "Iraq" makes enemies of all within its borders. At the same time, if the President uses the same figure of speech for the United States, then he has verbally aligned everyone against an enemy: "'America is angry, and I think **the rest of the world [is also]**,' Bush said" (McManus, "U.S. May. . ." A1).

But the Iraqi leaders also understand the same use of metonymy, for they include all Americans and Israelis in their threats from Iraqi state radio: "'**Israel** has to get out of the Palestinian land and other **Arabs'** land,' the broadcast said. 'Let the **United States** hear the wailing of its **daughter** implanted in the **heart** of the **Arab** homeland'" (Goldberg and Tuohy, "After False. . ." A7+). In addition, the radio message identifies a familial relationship between the U.S. and Israel by calling Israel the daughter of the U.S., and further implying, by using a body part for a large chunk of the Middle East, that the heart as the

center of life for Arabs has been contaminated by Israelis.

On the other hand, names of leaders can be used to represent the entire country as in referring to Saddam Hussein as the power the allies are fighting and to Bush as the representative of the allies' interests. This type of figurative language may be more accurate, for most people on either side have little power in affecting the actions called for by the leaders. For example: "**Saddam Hussein** faces a \$1-trillion-plus array of lethal weaponry. . ." (Schrage, "War With. . ." D1). Yet the incongruity here is that although Hussein's leadership set the war in motion, Hussein's troops faced the lethal weaponry while he hid in nuclear-resistant underground bunkers. By a metonymic use of language, we permit ourselves to attack the representatives (troops) of the true enemy (Hussein) who instigated the whole hostile situation. It is not so easy to attack the Iraqi people, but it is not so difficult to attack their leader. However, political pressures from the Arab allies and Hussein's own survival skills made an actual attack on him impossible.

The Saddam name, however, became very commonly used in Times articles, both in reporters' own words and the words of those quoted. This suggests the powerful effect of this use of metonymic expressions in warfare. Some persons understand its meaning clearly: "Rep. Dana Rohrabacker (R-Long Beach) said, '**Saddam** is getting exactly what he

asked for. . . I hope that we find out where Saddam Hussein is early on in the conflict, and, if we do, it will be a much shorter conflict. It's clear our fight isn't with the people of Iraq; it's with this megalomaniac who has forced this fight upon us'" (Tumulty and Eaton, "Lawmakers. . ." A10).

Others, particularly troops, call the recipients of the destruction of their weapons "Saddam" but Hussein himself will not be hurt at all. "Spec. Rich Klementovich, 21, of Mannville, N.J., chalks **"Saddam is Going to Die'** on one of his mortars. **'They** don't have a chance,' he says. We're going to do **him in'**" ("Seed Corn . . ." H7). By switching his naming of the enemy from Saddam, to "they," to "him," the soldier indicates that he knows he is firing the mortar at the Iraqi soldiers, yet he prefers to direct his hostility at the leader, Hussein. Another soldier does the same thing: "'Yee hah!' shouted Specialist David Langston, of Garland, Tex., as his battery fired more than 1,000 MLRS rockets and howitzer rounds earlier this week. **'Saddam, you** didn't know what **you got yourself into, buddy'**" (Drogin, "Rockets. . ." A6). Again, by this use of metonymy, the troops suffer literally as symbols for their leader. Times reporters make no effort to explain this metonymic effect, but merely report what the troops say. Readers must be aware enough to understand this transfer of hostilities from the instigator of all the trouble to his troop representatives.

The Iraqis themselves also see Hussein as the cause of the conflict, and his name represents the damage to Iraq. Fineman reports on second-hand news from Baghdad: "One of the western journalists, Richard Beeston of the Times of London, quoted one man in his mid-40's who approached him and said, 'This isn't our war. This is **Saddam's** war. He has taken the country back 40 years'" ("Bomb-Weary. . ." Al+).

Bush himself is seen by Lauter and Gerstenzang as fostering this centering of blame on Hussein. They say, ". . .the President turned the war against Iraq into a war against one man--**Iraqi President Saddam Hussein**. . . 'No one should weep for this **tyrant when he is brought to justice,**' Bush said. 'No one--anywhere in the world'" ("Bush and . . ." All). But it is ironic that a Presidential directive forbids the direct targeting of Hussein, and Bush knew that. Yet the language Bush uses in the rest of the quotation avoids mentioning the destruction of the Iraqi troops: "In what aides said was a speech Bush wrote himself, the President said that 'all life is precious, whether it's the life of an American pilot or an Iraqi child. Yet if life is precious, so too are the living principles of liberty and peace'" ("Bush and . . ." All).

Yet all Times readers haven't accepted the allied part in the war as the metonymic targeting of Hussein. In an

opposite example, a "Letters to the Times" writer centers all the fault metonymically on Bush: "President Bush, I do more than pray for peace, as you prescribe. I demand peace. God will not fix the damage that **you** have created, and will, no doubt, continue to create. It is up to the people who care to stop this lawbreaking crusade before more destruction has occurred" (Desilets, B4). Bush, as leader of the allies, has become the symbol of all the allies and their war efforts.

Other examples of metonymy are also common in the war reportage, but their use is not so loaded with impact for or against particular sides or leaders. For instance, in commonly understood expressions, the Pentagon can speak, the brass are the officers, blue-collar towns can mourn their dead, the Washington Post can protect what it knows about battle plans, other countries can be consulted, the Arab street can have an opinion, and most common of all, the body part "hands" may have control of a situation as in allied hands or having a free hand.

While the use of metonymy, as such, is not the likely subject of casual conversation, it is widely used, and may have power to influence attitudes and actions of the public for or against public figures by oversimplifying and depersonalizing an enemy. We can say we are fighting Iraq or say we are fighting the aggressor Hussein when we are actually attacking his troops who are merely following

orders. Metonymy in war reportage may reveal a way of justifying violent action without squarely facing who the true enemy is or who the true victims will be. But metonymy may be of benefit as well, for it can help focus whole groups of people into productive understanding with a "common sense." For instance, we can say, "the Liberty Bell has rung again, this time for the Kuwaitis," and American readers will understand that the Kuwaitis again have freedom from Iraq just as Americans have freedom from English colonization. Metonymy can add more complex meanings to simple syntagms, and writers as well as readers will be more efficient in their use and understanding of language if they are aware of the power of metonymy.

In this chapter, we have examined the wide variety of metaphoric concepts and other figurative language employed by Times writers as they report and comment about events and ideas concerning the Persian Gulf War of 1991. In the next chapter, we will see how language reveals the cultural myths of the warring factions.

## Chapter 3

### Preavailing Myths Influencing the War

Examples of metaphoric expression which we examined in the last chapter have their own unique power to influence how we perceive our world. As writers infuse their reportage with figurative language, the stories may reveal the writers' myths which color their approach to subjects which may, in turn, influence readers to accept reporters' positions. If we examine news stories according to Barthes' argument about myth, formed from the personal histories of the writers, and then we see how the writers illustrate their stories with metaphoric expressions as identified and explained by Lakoff and Johnson, and Lakoff and Turner, we can see larger cultural myths emerging. In this last chapter, by using Times reportage, we will study the most prominent American myth. It will include the positions held by President Bush, the government, the military, and those in the American public who supported the war. We will see first how this myth is expressed and then try to explain its origins and meanings. Next, we will examine the myth of Hussein and the Iraqi people, see how it is expressed, and try to explain its origins and meanings. A few myths of other countries directly affected by the war will be examined in the same way.

As language shapes and expresses our cultural myths, it

is manifest in political positions such as our attitudes toward our own government's behavior and our judgment of the actions of other governments. When cultural myths are not understood or accepted by another group, and when communication cannot bring about understanding leading to mythical coexistence, one side may take action that leads to violent confrontation. We will try to discover how divergent opinions can lead to violent confrontation.

We will explore through what the Times printed how the American cultural myth clashed with what the Iraqi leadership said and did in the name of Iraq. We will see how all the previously identified metaphors and other figurative language are used to express meaning. Once again, these figures will be highlighted with bold type so that a glance may give readers an idea of the frequency of their use. Any sentence or paragraph may contain several types of metaphors or other figures, yet all may work together to create a more complex level of meaning. From this examination, we should be able to tell if Times reportage is likely to affect public opinion.

## The American Myth

Although the Persian Gulf crisis occurred on another continent, and Saddam Hussein's actions against his neighbors were not a direct threat to the physical safety of the United States, characteristics of the prevailing American cultural myth allowed the United States to become involved. President Bush took a stance on behalf of the United States against the behavior of Iraq when it invaded Kuwait, for America perceives itself to stand against naked aggression of one nation against another. In this instance, it was against Hussein's danger to factions of his own people, against Iraq's hostile takeover of Kuwait, and against Iraq's implied threat of invasion of Saudi Arabia and possibly other Persian Gulf nations. However, having Iraq control Kuwait's vast oil fields was also a serious economic threat to the United States. Since none of the surrounding nations had military power equal to Iraq's huge military force, the United States was the only nation capable of stopping and reversing Hussein's invasion of Kuwait. By taking a stand against Iraq, the Bush administration could suggest to other national leaders that such behavior would not be tolerated. The U.S. could assume the position of world policeman to ensure a harmonious future among all nations, Bush's vision of a "new world order." In Bush's idea of the "new world order," we see

reflected certain cultural beliefs that show how Americans see the world--other people all deserve the right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" just as Americans do. Americans understand these as inalienable rights, for they are spelled out in the Constitution. Early Americans were willing to die to secure these rights. They are a part of the "common sense" or American history. But the term "rights" can be misused and capitalized upon by those with the desire and the ability. Readers must determine for themselves whether American leaders were distorting the mythical understanding of "inalienable rights" in their attempt to apply them to other nations, then use American soldiers to try to enforce them.

The Times prints Bush's explanation of how he justifies American involvement on another continent

This was war thrust upon us, not a war that we sought.

But **naked** aggression such as we have seen must be resisted if it is not to become a pattern, and our success in the Gulf will bring with it not just a new opportunity for peace and stability in a critical part of the world but a chance to **build** a new world order based upon the principles of collective security and the rule of law ("Text of. . ." A16).

To serve as analysis to Bush's myth for the American people, the Times prints Ronald Brownstein's comments

'The public doesn't want Americans fighting all over the world for all sorts of arcane causes,' said Democratic pollster Mark Mellman. 'But, on **the other hand**, we do feel a responsibility as a world leader, and for the most part people want to see America exercising that responsibility.'

Many say that the Gulf War has demonstrated the continuity of more traditional American attitudes toward war: the willingness to **rally behind** the commander-in-chief, defer to his decisions and **embrace** his objectives.

'We really are a fairly homogenous society,' said Republican pollster William McInturff. Those are very, very, enduring values in our country' ("War Shows. . ." A1+).

In addition, Joshua Muravchik has now transferred Bush's ideas to that of all America. Muravchik has accepted and adopted Bush's ideas as the way it is and should be

In this **first chapter** of post-Cold

War history, **America** has decided that **it** wants to be a leader rather than repair to isolation, and **it** has shown that in place of bipolarity we now live in a world of one superpower.

Military prowess is but one part of America's strength. The coalition of nations assembled to assist or support our effort in the Gulf is a mark of the respect and trust America enjoys. Whatever envy or resentment others may feel of our power, all know that we are not out to subjugate any nation or build an empire. . . .

**Decline** should ever be so sweet

"Decline Should. . ." B7).

A Times editorial takes a position that U.S. involvement in the Middle East could be of use to the region, but the cultural differences between American society and Arab societies are likely to thwart American goals. The Times editorial writer, showing a strong opinion against Hussein, offers that Hussein has severely harmed his own country, and states, "Iraq and the region would, of course, be far better off if this thuggish **megalomaniac** **vent quickly** as a matter of **moral justice**," but the editorial writer has reservations about our ability to

effect lasting harmony in the region. "The plain fact is that Western political values remain essentially alien to these societies and there is no reason to think that will change. . . The United States can't **reshape** the Middle East. Maybe, though it can **play a lead role** in **moving** the region to a more stable future: ("Now That. . ." B6). Most readers understand that in editorials, the writer's opinion will be expressed, that a position will be taken, and that readers are expected to engage in debate with those opinions. The opinions express mythical approaches of how America should react to the Persian Gulf conflict, and readers, according to their own mythical backgrounds, will agree with, argue with, or ignore the opinions of the writers. If the writers' opinions are sufficiently convincing, some readers who have disagreed in the past, may let their old beliefs go and replace them with the writers' arguments.

Vice-president Dan Quayle's support of America's role as a leader in human rights enforcement is reported by Gerstenzang. Quayle is restating the American myth while admonishing the Kuwaitis to uphold it

'To discourage future Saddams, we need to **stand up** against the human rights violators, whoever and wherever they are,' the vice-president said. . . 'That's where you **come in**, as leaders of a liberated Kuwait. You will have a **key role**

**to play** in creating a new Middle East that is free. Where Saddam Hussein **trampled** on the rule of law, you must **uphold** it,'

Quayle said ("Kuwaiti Trainees. . ." A12).

Quayle's position in admonishing the Kuwaitis to uphold American ideals is another way of stating to the world that he believes in the correctness of America's actions in the Gulf as well as encouraging the Kuwaitis to improve their own human rights behavior in the future. The United States has become the model of correctness, and therefore has the justification to point out errors in other countries' behaviors.

But the Times also prints in its editorial section, "Column Left," which contains divergent opinions that criticize the American myth as promoted by Bush and Quayle. While pin-pointing television reporting, Alexander Cockburn expresses his interpretation of America's attitude as patronizing and colonialist that he says more nearly explains how some anti-American Arabs see the U.S. He writes

In sum, TV news mostly amplifies the government agenda and eradicates history where it is inconvenient. Thus now the majority can rejoice that a **just** war has been fought by a **principled** government, rather than confront the actual fact that **disproportionate** violence has unnecessarily

been **meted** out according to colonialist **precepts** that would have been well understood by any imperial power a hundred years ago ("War Proves. . ." B7).

Cockburn contrasts the myth of America's benevolence in trying to help a small nation recover from the domination of the bully Iraq by pointing out that the U.S., in turn, has been bullying Iraq. We can see exposed here the mythical conflict, that when left unresolved with language, may erupt into physical violence. Careful readers of Cockburn's arguments may be influenced to abandon their support of the government's policies, ignore him, or intellectually argue with his position.

Besides printing opinion which seeks to define the American myth, the Times includes the comments of citizens and soldiers who support the President's leadership in the handling of the war. First, a woman agrees with the idea of the U.S. role as the world's police force to enforce "what we believe in"

Barbara Lee, a former Marine, and married to deployed staff sergeant, Chris Lee, said, 'I grew up watching **John Wayne movies and 'Combat'** with my father, and I joined because I was always willing to fight for what we believe in. . .'

The United States, Lee suggests, has a

duty to be the world's **policeman**. If not us, Lee asks, 'Who? Should it be Saddam Hussein? Should it be [Libyan leader Moammar] Kadafi? Or maybe we should let Manuel Noriega out and let him do it' (Harris, "Marine Town. . ." A1).

The mythical belief of Lee that the U.S. is right, therefore others are automatically wrong, is what drives her position that the U.S. must fight.

Second, a myth exists among service people that Americans are proud to treat POWs humanely because Americans are "the good guys." It is ironic that American soldiers will kill the opposing force, but when the enemy surrenders (and by so doing, acquiesces to the American myth), the American soldiers will see that they receive humane treatment. This attitude indicates that the Americans believe in the correctness of their myth. This idea is illustrated in Edwin Chen and Paul Richter's report: "For Spec. 4 Brannon Lamar of North Augusta, S.C., it was **summed** up in a single event: 'When we took all those POWs and didn't mistreat them or gun them **down**, I wanted to cry,' he said, 'I was so proud to be a U.S. soldier. Maybe we are the good guys this time'" ("U.S. Shakes. . ." A1). By adding "This time," he is showing that he thinks in previous conflicts Americans weren't always "the good guys." The old myth of "my country right or wrong" may be changing to "my country only if we do

what I think is the right thing."

In addition, the troops have been trained to be sensitive to Arab culture, so Schwarzkopf says he feels the U.S. has been especially considerate. David Lamb reports: "On American soldiers coming to Saudi Arabia: 'The world predicted, 'Oh my **goodness**, culturally the Americans are really **going to step in it** over there. They're going to be drunken soldiers rolling around inside the souk.' It hasn't happened. The fact that we have culturally respected this area cannot be ignored in the Arab world'" ("Schwarzkopf Views. . ." A17).

But Bearak adds a touch of satire as he turns the rah-rah for our side approach to one of buffoonery as he concludes with a fabricated colloquial parody of what he thinks represents mindless patriotism

And so the war had **come** to this, few Americans killed, the enemy **turned tail**, the '**mother of all battles**' no more than a **shrinking violet easily plowed under**. . .

'I tell you, at school we say the pledge of allegiance every day, but those kids lately, they say it like they mean it,' said Vernon Paul, high school principal in the tiny West Texas town of Seminole. . .

**Sea to shining sea**, the prevailing

sentiment was much the same: Hooray for us! We **kicked butt!** America the Great! We take no guff from no one no more no how ("Feeling on . . ." A1).

As Bearak ridicules patriotic slogans, readers whose beliefs disagree with his are likely to be offended at his belittling approach and consider his remarks to come from one who is disloyal to the country. It is almost as if the Times places Bearak's article on page A1 to prove to any critics that they are trying to give exposure to points of view which depart from the majority of the readership who believe someone had to stop Hussein's aggression, and citizens must support those sent to do it.

To keep alive the American myth that "our cause is just," it is necessary for the government and the military to reveal the justification of punishing the opposing force for what the American public understands as outrageous atrocities. Hussein made this easy; killing his own people, the Kurds, and the Kuwaitis, and practicing "environmental terrorism" outraged the sense of justice of the American public. We find the Times dutifully reporting many articles over the entire span of the war telling of Hussein's behavior which violated Americans' sense of decency. We will include samples from a variety of these sources.

Lamb reports on February 7, midway into the war

. . . Saddam Hussein, Schwarzkopf says, isn't a military man; he is simply a terrorist.

Hussein's record is difficult to defend, even for Arabs who admire his boldness in **standing up** to the West. Among the accusations:

He has had many of his closest advisers executed, used gas on his Kurdish minority, fired Scud missiles at civilian centers in Saudi Arabia and Israel, brutalized Kuwait with a vengeance not seen since the Pol Pot era in Cambodia, **sacrificed** half a million of his countrymen in a **senseless** eight-year war against Iran and left his army to defend itself--and die in large numbers--in the desert in order to satisfy his own need to achieve some sort of personal victory from Iraq's invasion of Kuwait ("Saddam Hussein. . ." A5).

By citing Schwarzkopf's opinion that Hussein is a terrorist, then listing Hussein's misdeeds, Lamb has made a strong argument for readers who respect both Schwarzkopf and the Times that the United States is justified in military involvement in weak Kuwait.

Joshua Muravchik, in another obvious opinion piece, includes his rationale that our cause is just. Yet the writer's work is nearly bare of metaphor, perhaps because he feels the arguments against Hussein's behavior is sufficiently powerful to readers that metaphorical examples are unnecessary

President Bush linked this act of ecocide [dumping 11 million barrels of oil in the Gulf] to other vicious but militarily useless attacks on Israeli and Saudi cities and the abuse of POWs. Yet there is a difference. Cowardly and vile as are the Scud attacks, cruel and illegal as is the abuse of prisoners, we can grasp that Hussein sees Israel and Saudi Arabia and the POWs as his enemies. But what conceivable **grievance** has he against the water fowl and fishes? ("Striking a . . ." B7).

The Times editorial staff shares the previous writer's convictions and adds more

This is a **regime** that **flouts** its contempt for humane values by **murdering** its own citizens and those of Kuwait in the thousands. This is a **regime** that has reintroduced poison gas

as a battlefield weapon, and as a weapon against its own helpless civilians.

This is a **regime** that uses its **terror** missiles against another civilian population in a desperate effort to transform Israel from a noncombatant into a belligerent ("The All-Too. . ." B6).

Again, we see few metaphors. But metonymy, using "regime," places blame on Iraq's whole government rather than Hussein only. Yet the unembellished list of evidence against the "regime" marches relentlessly into readers' consciences, leaving little room for argument. Some readers may feel that this Times editorial has proven beyond a reasonable doubt that "our cause is just."

One particular rhetorical figure, however, enables writers to focus hostility narrowly toward Hussein. By metonymically placing all the blame on the leader, the U.S. is justified in using its most powerful military weapons on his troops, calling them "him." We find this rhetorical figure being used to further Americans' myth of seeing themselves as helping out those they deem to be in need against a common enemy, easily understood as only Hussein. The President, reporters, military leaders, troops, and citizens all employ this kind of metonymy as we shall see in several Times reports. First Healy quotes Bush: "President Bush said in his first speech since the earliest days of the

allied offensive. . . 'There can be no pause now that **Saddam** has forced the world into war'" ("Iraq Defeat. . ." A1). Reporter Balzar speaks for himself: "Each big war has its **monster**. This war's is **Saddam Hussein**" ("When Masks. . ." H1). Lamb describes the behavior of American military leaders Richard Cheney and Colin Powell: "When someone asked Cheney and Powell to sign a bomb being prepared for a Stealth mission, they obliged with a black, felt-tipped pen. 'To **Saddam: You** didn't move **it** and now **you'll** lose **it**. Colin Powell,' the chairman wrote. Cheney added: 'To **Saddam**, with affection. Dick Cheney. Def. Sec.'" ("Cheney, Powell . . ." A6). And a citizen also singles out Hussein for destruction as reported by Jennifer Warren

. . . 'War's an ugly **business**,' said [James] Bruni, a **steely-eyed** Vietnam veteran laid off with 34 others from a mining job a few weeks back, 'but you've got to **face** the realities. We've got a guy over there who wants to rule the world. The **bottom line** is, you've got to **take him out** . . . It's not fun, it's not glory, it doesn't always end like the **Rambo movies** but it's got to be done' ("Stealth Jet. . ." A1+).

Metonymy allows us to name Hussein as the enemy, and so our myth of being the good guys remains strong, yet

rather than target him directly, we wage war against his representatives. The Times does not explain this phenomenon, but explains what concerned people are doing and saying.

In addition, the Times provides background material on Hussein that attempts to explain his behavior. This information would be gathered by reporters' as they research biographical material from primary and secondary sources. However, unlike regular academic research, news articles do not require disclosure of all sources. Readers must judge the information's validity by considering the credibility of the totality of the newspaper's reportage.

For instance, Stephen Braun and Tracy Wilkinson summarize Hussein's background in less than flattering description

From childhood, swaggering to school with a gun under his belt, to his present **role** as chosen enemy of the Western World, the **common denominators** in Hussein's life have been his **pursuit** of revolution, personal and political power and a place in history. Now 53 years old, he **steeped** himself in the tactics of insurrection, refining them over two decades of political **carnage** that shaped modern Iraq ("What Sort. . ." Al).

The reporters have chosen to depict Hussein as a bully by describing him "swaggering to school with a gun under his belt" and pursuing violent revolution. Casting this light on Hussein enhances the American belief that he is dangerous and cruel. Again, the effect on readers is meant to be that America's "cause is just" in putting such a bully in his place.

We see more justification of the need to stop Hussein in the next article which uses the authority of a medical expert. A professor of psychiatry at George Washington University describes Hussein's mental health

While he [Saddam] is psychologically **in touch** with reality, he is often politically **out of touch** with reality. His world view is narrow and distorted. He has scant experience outside the Arab world;. . . He is surrounded by sycophants who are **cowed** by his reputation for brutality and afraid to criticize him.

. . . What began as an **act of naked** aggression toward Kuwait has been transformed into the culminant **act of the drama** of his life. . . His psychology and his political options have now become captives of his rhetoric.

His heroic self-**image** is engaged as never before. He is fulfilling the **messianic** goal that has obsessed him-- and eluded him--throughout his life. He is actualizing his self-concept as leader of all the Arab peoples, the legitimate heir of Nebuchadnezzar, Saladin, and Nasser (Post, "Crazy Like. . ." B7).

Another picture of Hussein has been presented to readers to prove that the U.S. is fighting someone mentally twisted--further evidence that "our cause is just."

Times staff reporters themselves reveal their depth of conviction that "our cause is just" with an amazing metaphor comparing Hussein to a vampire, known to American theater audiences as a dreaded, blood-sucking monster. Healy and Broder, while extending the threat of Hussein to include his Republican Guard force, write of stopping him as one might stop the evil Count Dracula. "Administration strategists believe that crushing the 150,000 man Republican Guard will **drive a stake through the heart of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's regime** and lead to the collapse of the rest of Iraq's million-man army" ("Key U.S.. . ." A1). Because this article appears on page one as hard news where most readers expect less sensational imagery to be used in reporting world events, readers might assume the Times as a whole

endorses the position taken by Healy and Broder. Iraqi sympathizers who had been reading the Times carefully, would conclude that it definitely supported the American side in the conflict.

Other articles speculate about what further hostile actions Hussein might order in the future. The slant of the articles suggests that this pattern of his behavior must be stopped. Therefore, the American ideal of trying to right the wrongs in the world surely needs to be applied in this case, and therefore, the war becomes necessary. Healy and Balzar quote Lt. Gen. Peter de La Billiere who says,

"'Saddam Hussein is a man who uses human life as a **currency to buy what he wants** in this world. . . ' and that he 'is quite deliberately deploying his weapons among civilians with the precise aim of killing civilians'" ("Cheney Hints . . ." A1). William Schneider analyzes Hussein's

behavior: "He **stages** an oil spill in the Persian Gulf to prove this war will have terrible consequences. He tries to lure the United States into a **bloody** ground war to **drive up** our casualty count. Maybe we're not fighting the Vietnam War, but he is" ("Bush Insists. . ." M1+).

Nick B. Williams adds another dimension as he explains a communique from Baghdad Radio and selects quotations from it

Hussein, . . . has tried to **cast** Iraq as the victim of big-power **bullying** since U.S.-led forces invaded on Jan. 17.

. . . Baghdad Radio broadcast . . . an undisguised call for revolutions in Egypt, Syria and other Arab countries committed to driving the Iraqi army out of Kuwait.

'O Arabs,' the broadcast said, "this is your Iraq. . . a strong and confident Iraq. Take to the **streets of revolution**. This is your historic chance, this is the [Arab] nation's historic chance, to get rid of its treacherous and cowardly rulers ("Cease-Fire. . ." A7).

Rather than have the effect he wanted, however, Hussein's words inspired little reaction from his fellow Arabs, and in the United States, when contrasted with the American myth that was beginning to see him as a monster, these words were taken as the desperate rhetoric of a madman. The Times received little reader complaint concerning how articles like the previous examples characterized Hussein. This says that the readers either read the Times because they already agree with its position, so they would have no reason to argue, and/or that the reportage presented is sufficiently convincing so that readers agree with the Times' position.

Whether or not it supports the myth of the United States being morally correct in its actions in the Gulf, the Times includes articles that show the allies practicing the very virtues that the U.S. has accused Hussein of violating.

For example, we perceive ourselves as being compassionate to the prisoners of war

'I wanted to look at my adversary in the face after 20 years in the Army,' said public affairs specialist Lt. Col. Bob Parrich, 40, of Greeley, Colo. He rode the jumpseat in a CH-47 Chinook helicopter during one mission to pick up this 'opportunity cargo [Iraqi POWs].'

'They were like Americans, more or less, only Iraqis,' said Sgt. [Robert] Simpson. 'They've just got someone else telling them what to do. They didn't look aggressive, they didn't look like they wanted to be out killing anything. They didn't look like they wanted to do this anymore' (Balzar, "Surrendering Iraqis. . ." A7).

Bearak shows us that some people's thinking justifies fighting to defend the helpless: "Richard Hull, 42, raises hogs in Graham, Tex. 'I am not an advocate of war. But with this experience, it just shows you that some people don't understand any other language but force'" ("Feeling on . . ." A1+). When readers read the quoted opinion of an ordinary American, a hog farmer, they get a sense of the grass roots support for the war. If average folks around

the country see the need to fight Hussein, readers may feel compelled to join what they think is a groundswell of agreement with the government's actions. If in addition, readers feel that in spite of the American military superiority, Americans care about the well-being of the average Iraqi citizens, the lines are clearly drawn to show that Iraq's government is the true enemy of the Iraqi people as well as of the Americans and allies. The effect of this approach furthers the idea that "our cause is just."

Peter D. Feaver explains that the Iraqi people should understand their own government, and that the allies now must not treat the Iraqi people as the enemy.

The Iraqi people must not be left thinking that the war was a noble effort sabotaged by **back-stabbing** Arab brothers in a Zionist conspiracy; they must see it as it was, the tragic **megalomania** of a corrupt regime.

But they must also see **justice tempered** by mercy. The pitiful performance of Iraqi troops proves their claim that this was Saddam Hussein's war ("Generosity Begins. . ." B7).

In addition, because the American myth says the U.S. must be "the good guys," Fineman's article tells readers how the enemy went astray. He reports on the analysis of

strategists

Ever since Hussein **came** to power more than a decade ago, he has manipulated the Iraqi's deep desire for **symbols** of national pride. Each major military advance that Iraq achieved filled the Iraqis with as much pride as it **fueled** the fears of Iraq's enemies and the West' ("Hussein Playing. . ." A5).

If readers accept Fineman's explanations of how the Iraqis could have tolerated Hussein's rise to power, readers may also feel some pity for a nation Fineman claims has been duped into believing that Hussein's actions were brave and honorable against the influence of the U.S. on Arab interests.

The preceding quotes contain points of view which suggest that Americans perceive their myth to be so correct that they can even try to understand the Iraqi's position. American readers may be glad to read reports of how the Iraqis have been led astray by their leader, for this approach does not attack the American belief that "our cause is just." Americans will not feel pressured to rethink their support of their government's actions. Add to this expressions of gratitude from the Kuwaitis, and American readers are likely to be even more convinced the government has taken the correct action.

On Sunday about 100 Kuwaitis and their American friends gathered at the Federal Building in Westwood. A strong wind made it hard to hold signs that declared: 'It's Not for Oil. It's for **Justice, Hussein is a baby killer**' and 'Thank you, **America**' (Harris, "Kuwaitis in. . ." A8).

As the Times prints an opinion from parents of a Scud victim of what should happen to Hussein after the war, he is seen as the focal point of blame

The parents [of Scud victim Steve Farnen], who are churchgoers with four children in all, said they were not **mad** at the Iraqis. 'It's their **damn fool** leader,' Hugh Farnen said. 'I hope the Iraqi people take care of him; he's brought more **hell** on them than anybody' (Israel, "Parents of. . ." A12).

An American officer also condemns Hussein

'Whenever I [A-6E squadron leader, Cmdr. Lou Crenshaw] look down there and I see the pounding they're taking, I just can't believe it,' Crenshaw said. 'It's just unbelievable [Saddam Hussein] has allowed that to happen to his own people. It's inconceivable. He should be hanged just

for that' (Drogin, "Land Battles. . ." A6).

The power of the American myth, we see here, is so strong that a flyer attacking the Iraqi army assumes no responsibility for the destruction that he causes because Hussein is to blame. Readers who also believe Hussein is to blame may wonder why Hussein, himself, is not the subject of attack rather than his soldiers. However, one congressman calls for Hussein's death: "Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (R.-Long Beach) said a presidential ban on assassinations should be loosened to permit U.S. forces to **go after** Hussein, arguing that there is 'nothing **immoral** about killing a **bloodthirsty** tyrant'" (Ross, "Lawmakers Back. . ." A20). Rohrabacher's position shows readers that he's given up on language as a tool to effect change, and that he sees Hussein as a monster not capable of reason.

Continuing the argument that Hussein literally is the enemy who should be targeted is Edward A. Gargan. He cites the opinions of a Nuremberg prosecutor: "'What Saddam has done, or said would be done, are plainly gross violations of the Geneva conventions, which, of course, among others, he for his country signed and accepted. . . Then the two other things we have been talking about, the treatment of prisoners in those two ways [parading them and using them as shields] would be chargeable under war crimes. . .'" ("Telford Taylor. . ." M3).

Although hunting down and assassinating Hussein was

not carried out, the ideas that he has committed war crimes, and that his death might ultimately save many lives, surface from several opinion writers. Readers are given various facets of the argument that, since Hussein is the instigator of the war, he should be targeted rather than his soldiers or the people of Iraq. Because these writers express no doubt that they speak from the "correct" position, they have no difficulty arguing in favor of targeting Hussein. As a way of ending the war, Alan C. Miller explores the possibility of trying to assassinate Hussein

Indeed, some Western analysts believe that Hussein's death might mean an immediate end to the war--preventing the slaughter of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of American soldiers as well as innumerable Iraqis in a **bloody** ground conflict.

'One of the things we want is to be sure he doesn't repeat this **adventure**,' says former CIA director William E. Colby. 'The commander of the enemy force is a legitimate target. . .'

**Political murder** has a long and inglorious history, dating back through biblical times' ("The Risk. . ." Al).

What the Iraqis think or want is not mentioned. Tom Bethell argues the logic of going after Hussein instead of his reluctant army

By the logic of President Bush's description of the ruthless Iraqi dictator, those who serve in Saddam Hussein's army have little choice in the matter. In which case, maybe it would have made more sense **to go after** the tyrant rather than those subjected to his tyranny ("Patriotism Doesn't. . ." B7).

And apparently Bush was considering such action, according to a report by Gerstenzang

As for Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, Bush would not say that the United States is trying to '**hunt him down.**' But in response to a question about the Iraqi leader, Bush said that 'nobody can be absolved from the responsibilities under international law on the war crimes' ("Allies and. . ." A1).

The Times has given readers several articles containing arguments in favor of targeting Hussein. Readers may agree and decide that war as usual (troops against troops) is illogical in this case. Readers may think it is not fair

to target people who are forced into war by an evil leader. If we are "the good guys," why are we hurting the innocent people of Iraq? This argument may be seen as an attempt by the Times to help clarify the American myth.

As the war was winding down and it was clear the U.S. and allies were defeating Iraq, a Times editorial sees the U.S. as a helpful figure in the Middle East: "The United States can't reshape the Middle East. Maybe, though it can **play a lead role in moving** the region **toward** a more stable future" ("Now That. . ." B6). The underlying American myth behind these ideas continues to be that we Americans know our principles are correct, and we have a right to concern ourselves with the affairs of the Middle East because "we are the good guys." And Tumulty quotes Bush voicing even more grandiose ideals

'In the final **analysis**,' President Bush said earlier this month, '**America** and her partners will be **measured** not by how we wage war but how we make peace. . . We will have before us an historic opportunity. From the confluence of the Tigris and the Euphrates, where civilization began, civilized behavior can begin anew' ("The Balancing. . ." A5).

These remarks say to the reader that Bush firmly believes the U.S. is the moral leader for Iraq, and that in spite of

Iraq's ancient history as the cradle of civilization, America has now set the stage for civilization to begin anew (since Hussein got it wrong). Americans who support the United States' actions will find Bush's remarks appropriate, but others, especially Iraqis, may find his remarks to be an indication of what they were disgruntled with in the first place--America's involvement in Middle Eastern affairs.

While the preceding articles have asserted the moral correctness of America's involvement in the Persian Gulf, the Times did print a small amount of guest editorial criticism of U.S. actions

We **demonized** and dehumanized our adversary. We indulged in personal name-calling, false analogies to past wars and **demonic** leaders of earlier times, then deliberately provoked Hussein through threats and insults. In this way we demeaned and humiliated our opponent, while lessening his incentive to respond to the pleas that were directed to him by so many individuals and nations.

We took no **account** of cultural differences. We listened to those who said that Hussein was non-religious, and interpreted his **invocations** to

**Allah** and the **Koran** as cynical political manipulation. We failed to consider the people's dual heritage as Iraqis and Muslims, and thus Hussein's willingness to **martyr** himself and his people in **standing up** to the Western '**infidel**' (Mack and Rubin, "Is This. . ." B7).

If readers are truly critical of the American myth of the moral correctness of our involvement in the Middle East, and if they read the Times thoroughly and thoughtfully, they will find some articles that seriously question America's behavior. Some express philosophical opposition to war under any circumstances, and some argue that the U.S. did not pursue sufficiently other alternatives to war. However, these positions do not reflect the majority-held belief of the American people, that "our cause is just" and "we are the good guys."

For a profit-making business, it is not surprising that the Times seeks to please the majority of its readers by reflecting back to them in accounts of the Persian Gulf War their own American cultural myth. Because it is a large newspaper, it can cover an event with several approaches written by a variety of reporters. It seeks out editorial comment both supporting the American myth and criticizing it, although the supportive articles are much more numerous.

To avoid feeling manipulated by what they may think is a biased approach, readers must read many articles over a significant span of time, then apply critical thinking skills to an analysis of all that has been read. Readers must assume responsibility for interpretation and assimilation of information that the Times reports.

In the next section, we will examine how the Times handles the Iraqi and Arab points of view regarding the Persian Gulf War.

\* \* \*

#### The Iraqi and Arab Myths

Iraq, in the land of the historic Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, has been called the "cradle of civilization." Much of ancient Biblical history has its roots in the region, as does Arabic tradition traced in the Koran of Islam. While the Times does not retell the history of the area in its writings, some articles, which show the writers' knowledge of the Iraqi-Arab myths, are written by Arab writers, university specialists in the history and culture of the area, and include quotations from Arab and Iraqi people.

One obvious rhetorical difference between American English and Iraqi expression is the use of exaggeration. Americans use hyperbole largely for special situations such as for humor or to marshal team support in contests. When

it is used, Americans are familiar with the context (as in a political rally), expect it, understand the nature of its use, but do not take it literally. Iraqi culture uses hyperbole in one different context with which Americans are not familiar. That is in expressing their opinions publicly. In a reflection of Iraqi culture, hyperbole is frequently used in Radio Baghdad's broadcasts and as people describe their feelings, but their exaggeration is understood by them as merely reasonable expression of feelings and not as precursors of imminent acting out of the feelings. Later in this section we will see examples of these expressions. As this custom is not commonly understood by American readers, when the Times quotes exaggerated statements of attitude, but does not qualify such statements in the context of the culture, readers are likely to become disgusted with and intolerant of the Iraqi position. The Times does little to explain the Iraqi custom of hyperbolic expression. As news reports contain hyperbolic quotes from Iraqi Radio or Iraqi citizens, American readers are likely to be offended, not understanding that Iraqi hyperbole is not to be taken literally. Throughout this section, we will see quotations expressing each sides' myth, and speculate how these may be misunderstood.

For Times' staff writers, the situation is difficult, for they must try to overlook their own cultural myths in order to gather information and report world news in

regions where freedom of speech and the press are not granted.

In an October 4, 1993, telephone interview with the Times, Simon Lee, Deputy Foreign Editor, answered questions concerning possible cultural difficulties for Times reporters covering the Gulf War.

The following is an account of the questions and his responses.

Q. In Persian Gulf War reporting, did the news staff ever discuss how writers' ethnic backgrounds or personal bias might affect their writing?

A. It was never an issue at the official level.

Q. Did the women reporters in Saudi Arabia experience any difficulty from Arab men while staying in the country, interviewing Arabs, and gathering information?

A. Yes. During Desert Shield before the war actually began, they encountered some obstruction of their activities. Kim Murphy bought ice cream in an American-franchised shop and was told she couldn't sit inside and eat by herself where Arab men were present. Later Kim had received permission from a Saudi government official in Riyadh to interview three men in her hotel room. The "religious police" broke in and stopped the interview because a single woman isn't allowed to bring men into her

room.

Q. The women reporters' writing seemed thorough. How much were they hindered by this Arab attitude toward women?

A. It definitely made the job more difficult, but it was really more of a nuisance. The women felt very constrained, separated.

Q. Did the presence of women reporters over there cause any softening of Arab men's behavior toward them?

A. No. Nothing changed.

With these constraints in mind then, Times articles reporting on events of the war regarding the Iraqi response must be read with the awareness that access to information from Arab sources for women reporters was more difficult because of the Arab male mythical attitude toward women regarding their expected and "proper" role. Further, writers could not help but write from their own cultural perspectives. Readers must determine for themselves whether the reporters' own myths seriously bias the reportage.

Two themes emerge from the reportage which tries to express the Iraqi and Arab myths--how the Iraqis and other Arabs feel about the leadership of the United States and how Saddam Hussein is perceived as a leader by his friends and foes.

Rami G. Khouri, a Palestinian political columnist and

author, explains

Even though most Arabs don't support the invasion of Kuwait, Saddam Hussein's fearlessness in **standing up** to our enemies, Israel and America, appeals to the new **spirit** of the Arab world--a **spirit** that says we'd rather die **on our feet** than live **groveling on the ground**.

Saddam Hussein is, of course, no **Santa Claus**. He is a rough man. He kills people ruthlessly. He has lived by the gun all of his life. Yet this unlikely, autocratic man has become the medium of the new Arab fearlessness that aims to cast off oppression and subjugation both from abroad and home.

. . . The minute American forces landed in the region, the whole **equation changed**. The issue was no longer Iraq occupying Kuwait. It was Iraq **standing up** to the arrogant **West**. . . For all of us now, Iraq **symbolizes** the willingness to **get up off our knees** and confront our enemies ("America Will. . ." B5).

However, Khouri speaks from the context of Palestinian cultural myth, which generally sided with Saddam Hussein because Hussein, knowing their desire, had made a Palestinian

homeland a key issue in the war. Five days later, a Times editorial quoted Khouri and another Arab, as these writers further amplify the Arab perspective

Saad Eddin Ibrahen, former secretary-general of the Arab Thought Forum. . .[said]

'This, of course, does not change how people feel about the **West**. Even the most anti-Hussein forces in the Arab world will never forgive the **West** for a long list of grievances, the latest of which is that the **West** helped Hussein to become the **Frankenstein** he became. The biggest grievance is the **double standard**-- the implicit racism in many of the **Western** policies toward this part of the world. When Hussein **pinpointed** that, he was right.'

Rami G. Khouri, Palestinian-Jordanian political columnist and author: [said]

"He [Hussein] articulated and **personified** a new Arab-Islamic **spirit** of defiance and fearlessness in the **face** of clear enemy superiority. That **spirit** rested on overwhelming Arab dissatisfaction with the artificial, unnatural and failed economic-political order following World War I; the **double standard** of the United Nations and

the world in applying Security Council resolutions; the **legacy** of the Western colonial and neo-colonial powers sending large armies to the Middle East to maintain an order that **suits** their commercial and strategic needs but does not **suit** the aspirations of the indigenous Arab-Muslim people, and the **U.S.** insistence that Israel should remain stronger than all its Arab neighbors' ("How Much. . ." M2).

Because the authors are Arabs, Khouri and Ibrahen's opinions of Arab attitudes and beliefs are likely to hold much credibility for American readers, for their arguments seem rational. American readers will find these arguments more persuasive than hyperbolic.

An American professor whose opinion piece also appears in the Times shares much the same position

From an Arab point of view, Bush's offer to talk constitutes more than a **face-saving** gesture. It concedes nothing but publicly acknowledges Hussein as a worthy adversary, one who can be persuaded instead of humiliated and despised. In Middle Eastern terms, Hussein's reputation remains intact so long as he can claim to work for a worthy collective cause. . . Sudden reversal of tactics

does nothing to lessen Hussein's prestige, so a peaceful solution with no **loss of face** among his Arab public, the only public that counts for him, is still possible. . . For Hussein's Arab **audience**, the essence of human affairs is provisionality. In changed circumstances, only a **fanatic** would stick to the same course. . . . Consider Hussein's labeling of Western and Japanese hostages as 'guests,' an **Orwellian** term even to Iraqis. In the world of the Iraqi leader's youth and in some parts of the Arab world today, the taking of hostages from adversary groups is a means of preventing violence until intermediaries can negotiate a settlement. . .

In Arab **eyes**, the **United States** shows honor by not yet using its overwhelming force against Iraq and in making every effort to **show Hussein an exit**. Under Middle Eastern 'rules,' the stronger party does not **bully** the weaker one into submission without offering alternatives to physical force, as the **United States** and its allies skillfully continue to do so (Eickelman, "Iraqi Retreat. . ." M2).

The writer adds to what the Arab authors have explained

without condemning or praising Hussein, yet he offers non-violent solutions to the Gulf Crisis by suggesting actions based on cultural understanding.

We know that after this article was written, the U.S. did use its awesome force on the Iraqis. Because of a cultural myth different from that of the U.S., their leadership chose to deny wrong for their invasion of Kuwait. Yet we can see that the Times tries to offer its readers thoughtful background material and expert analysis from various positions that put ordinary reporting of the war in a larger context.

Additional explanations of the Arab myth are expressed in several articles. Readers must assume responsibility for reading the bulk of Times war reportage in order to see the war's events and underlying causes in context. Continuing discussion of Arab culture, Doyle McManus quotes Augustus Richard Norton, a fellow at the International Peace Academy in New York

In Arab culture, there's nothing wrong with **giving in** to a **bully**. If Saddam can **give in** to the United States in a way that allows him to claim that he has advanced Arab interests--and keep his army intact--he will have **pulled a rabbit out of a hat** . . . He's **playing the other hand in a very tough game of Texas stud poker** and he's doing

it with some skill ("To Hussein. . ."A1+).

If readers accept this explanation of Hussein's behavior, then Iraqi propaganda broadcast over Baghdad Radio that tells the Iraqi people what Hussein thinks they want to hear--name-calling and berating the U.S. and its allies as bullies and infidels--seems perfectly predictable. Kenneth Freed explains how this American misunderstanding of Iraqi name-calling dissolves hope of a peaceful solution to the conflict

Iraq. . . promised 'revenge against President Bush for trying to expel Iraq from the 20th Century.'

. . . Baghdad has worked incessantly to portray the conflict as a war between the **infidel** and imperialistic West against the Arab and Islamic world. So cutting diplomatic relations, no matter how meaningless, is a finalizing symbol of the **chasm** between the two sides ("Iraq Cuts. . ." A10).

Healy and Balzar quote Baghdad Radio as it tries to add religious determinism to the coming conflict: "In a new call for terrorism against the allies, Baghdad Radio said this '**mother** of battles' is not like any traditional war. 'It is the battle to liberate **Mecca**, and the **tomb of Messenger Mohammed**. . .' it said, 'to liberate Palestine,

the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon. . .'" ("Cheney Hints. . ." Al+).

A rudimentary knowledge of some of the fundamentals of Islam would help the average reader understand that liberating Mecca, the sacred city of Islam, means seizing control of the area around this birthplace of Mohammed. Mecca sits in the country of Saudi Arabia, a major ally with the United States against Iraq. Seizing this land from the Saudis implies that the Saudis are infidels. "To liberate Palestine, the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon" declares that the Israelis, who then occupied these areas, are also the enemy. Baghdad Radio's message is trying to direct Arabs and Muslims to unite for a holy cause in this "mother of battles." The Times, however, does not explain the cultural/religious myth behind the Baghdad Radio broadcast. Readers either understand these serious threats to the whole region if they have some knowledge of Middle-Eastern history, or they may be left to think of the Iraqis only as bullying trouble-makers.

As it became apparent that Hussein's troops were hopelessly inadequate, we find another element of the Iraqi myth that may explain why Hussein maintained such defiance toward the U.S. and allies. Thomas B. Rosenstiel reports, "Simple survival can be especially meaningful given the psychological affinity in the Middle East for the **underdog**. Even to Arabs ambivalent toward Hussein, [Neil] Livingston

[Georgetown University professor] said, 'It could be like Davy Crockett at the Alamo'" ("Allies, Iraqis. . ." Al+). Even defeat can be explained

. . . said Assad Abdel Rahman, a Jordanian political scientist. . . 'Military defeat in an Arab culture: As long as you **put up** a fight, there is no problem in it. People are willing to take it, they are even willing to justify it,' he said. 'But to surrender would be to kill the **image** of the hero, and the **image of the martyr**, and this is an **image** that has been borrowed from history.'

. . . As for Hussein, he has joined Nasser in 'articulating something which lurks **beneath the surface** of our lives,' explained another Arab academic (Murphy, "Revisiting the. . ." Al+).

The most vociferous support came from Palestinians. Many Palestinians live in Jordan, whose King Hussein claimed neutrality and offered many supportive arguments for Saddam Hussein, who linked an anti-Israeli component and the creation of a Palestinian homeland to a settlement of the conflict.

For instance, even an official pronouncement from the Jordanian Parliament engages in religious rhetoric

The Parliament of Jordan on Friday

**backed** Iraq in the Persian Gulf War and **branded** the United States a '**Great Satan**' set on dominating the Arab and Muslim world.

'Our people hold America fully responsible for every **drop of blood that is shed** in battle,' the lower **house** said. . . "**God will decree victory for the Iraqi people and humiliation for all enemies of God and humanity. Tell those infidels, 'You will be overcome and cast into the furnace of hell,'** said the **80-seat chamber** ("Jordanian Parliament. . ." A20).

That these expressions seem unanimous is effected by the reporter's metonymic expression, "said the 80-seat chamber." Such hyperbole is likely to offend American readers, and the statements from Parliament take a unilateral position in favor of Iraq while ignoring Iraq's atrocities in Kuwait. If the Jordanian Parliament hoped to influence the Western world's opinion in favor of Iraq's call for a Palestinian homeland, they misunderstood the mythical backgrounds of Europeans and Americans, who are repulsed by what they see as illogical religious hyperbole. One wonders if, as Westerners try to apply a certain debate style in seeking to negotiate peace in the region, even the verbal boxing is seen by those steeped in the Islamic/Arab

myth as a type of "Big Brother" patronizing, for if the basic accepted forms of expression are very different, understanding will be restricted. But even more likely is that the Arabs and Moslems resent the U.S. for what they think is its attempt to mold them into its myth, as if it is the only correct myth.

This resentment of Americans can be demonstrated in comments quoted from Iraqi civilians. While these comments represent opinions of people not apprised of all the facts on both sides of the conflict, and while they may seem simplistic and inflammatory to American readers, they also demonstrate how people (Iraqis or Americans) may react when they have not received reasonable objective information.

Fineman reports of Palestinian oil tanker truck drivers, who violate the embargo against providing war-enabling supplies to Iraq. They come under attack from American aircraft because they are breaking the embargo

'If I could get my **hands** on Bush,' [Faouzi] Jamil continued, reflecting the fury shared by all the tank drivers who were interviewed, 'I would ask him, "Why is this happening to us?" What is our fight with him? Let him go fight at the war **front**.'

Mahmood. . . unlocked a tool box and pulled out two rusty 12-inch butcher knives.

'When I drive on that road,' he said, 'I wish that one day an American pilot will fall so I can **cut out his kidneys** with these knives and give them to **stray dogs** while he watches.'

Mahmood's anger and bitterness reflected just how deeply and emotionally the once pro-American Jordanians feel they have been **hurt** by the United States continuing to **hit** their countrymen and their **lifeline** to oil ("Arab Truckers. . ." A8).

And as the war concluded, we see the Palestinian denial of what they don't want to believe

Meantime, Palestinians received the news of the halt in fighting with resignation mixed with **fanciful imaginings** of an Iraqi victory. 'I know it is an Iraqi victory,' said Jafer, an activist in the Palestinian **uprising** who lives in the village of Kfar Malek. 'The Americans are lying when they say they took so many prisoners. I have only seen a hundred on TV' (Williams, "Israel Cautiously. . ." A12).

The effect of these kinds of quotes on readers is to humanize the enemy. As readers see the Palestinians' and Iraqis' words and feelings, they are confronted with the

depth of conviction of people on the opposing side. Readers must consider whether the American and allied side's justifications for the war are completely correct.

However, Jordanian criticism of the United Nations' stand against Iraq is more reasonably based, yet narrowed against the United States and omits the many other Arab nations aligned against Iraq. Two members of the Jordanian royal family speak out. Again we see the influence of the Palestinian cultural myth (feeling unjustly excluded from a homeland) influencing the remarks, to the extent that the approach is unilateral and ignores the position assumed by the Arab allies

The growing evidence of civilian destruction also is taking its **toll** on the political level throughout the region, Jordan's Crown Prince Hassan warned Sunday. Each day that the bombardment continues, America's **image** and that of its allies is **declining** throughout the Arab and Islamic worlds, he said.

'There's a **picture** of the United States sadly **reducing** a Third World country, in the name of what? In the name of restoration of Kuwait?' the prince said during an interview Sunday with CBS-TV in Amman (Fineman, "Refugees From. . ." A1+).

Fineman in another article two days later reports comments of Jordan's King Hussein

'If this is an example of the future **role** of the United Nations in the "new world order," what an ominous future lies before all nations,' he said.

The king made no mention of Iraq's brutal occupation of Kuwait, calling only for Iraqi-American and Arab-to-Arab dialogues **under the umbrella** of a cease-fire to settle all disputes **behind** the conflict ("Jordan King. . ." A8).

King Hussein is operating under his belief that Middle Easterners should settle Middle Eastern problems. The United States is included in the dialogues since it is already heavily involved in the war and in oil-related business interests in the area. With King Hussein's call for talks, if they should be held, power and leadership for settlement of the war goes back to Arabs, and they can also deal with underlying issues that led to the war in the first place. That a cease fire for talks did not ensue, suggests that the United States and some of its Arab allies did not wish to relinquish power to determine settlement of problems in the region to the Palestinians. In this case, the allies' mythical beliefs prevailed, and they had the military force to see that they did.

Meanwhile, the Times attempts to reveal more about Saddam through expert analysis of his background and behavior, his own words from Iraqi state-controlled publications and Baghdad Radio, comments from citizens, and explanatory material by Times reporters as they place events in context.

For instance, Robin Wright quotes an expert who analyzes Hussein's behavior: "'He's convinced his **role** in history will be written by those who say this is the **man** who could withstand punishing blows from the Americans and, in the midst, take the initiative against Israel,' said William B. Quandt, a former National Security Council staff member. . . ." ("Patriot Move. . ." A1+). And Nick B. Williams adds his own touch regarding Hussein's style of speaking, as he paraphrases a speech by the Iraqi leader. He says Hussein ". . . speaking to a domestic audience, rallied in his familiar martial rhetoric. He said that a war with the American-led forces--a conflict that he once again termed 'the **mother** of battles' in an Army Day Address on Sunday--would '**lift** humanity'" ("Hussein Sees. . ." A12). In the same article, Hussein's threat to cause American soldiers "to **swim in their own blood**," further casts him, in American eyes, as a bloodthirsty lunatic. Doyle McManus, just three days later, tempers Hussein's threat by interpreting his strategy

And Hussein appears to genuinely

believe that the U.S. Congress and public will stop a war if Iraqi forces inflict enough casualties on American troops. . . . At least two other factors appear to be guiding the Iraqi leader's decisions: First, his **coldblooded calculation** that he would lose by capitulating to the **West's** demands, and, second, his well-developed sense of 'dignity'--both Iraq's and his own ("To Hussein. . ." Al+).

As the war progresses, we find the analysis of Hussein continuing in light of his increasingly hopeless position. James Gerstenzang reports

Some experts in Arab affairs have concluded that Hussein may have given up on achieving a military victory. They believe his objective is to seek a political victory of sorts by holding out as long as possible against the U.S.-led coalition so he can **portray himself** among the Arab nationalists as a hero for having **stood up** to the United States. Asked whether he subscribes to this view, the official said: . . . 'A lot of the things he's doing . . . are intended primarily to **enhance his image** not only among Iraqis,

but also among poor Arabs throughout the Middle East'. . . The official also said, as have others, that the Iraqi president appears to be surrounded by aides who are unwilling to present him with an accurate **picture** of the military situation with which he is **faced**. . . 'People tend not to tell him the actual situation, but **paint it in colors** that tend to make them look good,' he said ("Baffled White. . ." A8).

Additional information about Hussein comes directly from General Schwarzkopf who tells of Saddam's duplicity. "The fact that Hussein now confines his movements to residential neighborhoods, sleeping each night in a different house, is convincing evidence, he [Schwarzkopf] said, that even the Iraqi president knows that the allies are not targeting civilian areas" (Lamb, "Schwarzkopf Sees . . ." A1+). The collective effect of the American reporters' analyses of Hussein picture him for American readers as someone out of touch with what is actually happening in the war. He seems to be playing a role, telling the Iraqis what he thinks they want to hear. American readers who try to understand the beliefs behind his rhetoric might get a bit of understanding of what frustrations underlie Iraqi toleration of Hussein's

seemingly self-destructive leadership.

On February 27, the day the Iraqis were beginning their withdrawal, the Times prints an excerpt from a hyperbolic speech of Hussein's. He says that what has happened is God's will and refuses to admit defeat

O great people. O nobles in the forces of **jihad** [holy war] and **faith**.  
O glorious men of 'the **mother** of battles.'  
O truthful, **zealous believers** in our glorious nation and all **Muslims** and good people in the world. O glorious Iraqi women: . . . Today, our fight against aggression and **atheism** in a 30-country coalition that has officially waged a U.S.-led war on us will have lasted from the night of Jan. 16-17 until this moment--two months of the legendary **showdown**. . . Everything we went through or decided was with compliance with **God's will**. **Faith** is a **record** of honor to the people, the nation and the values of **Islam** and humanity. . . You defeated wrong with right and **God's** help. You were victorious the day you declined, in the name of **faith**, **evil's** will. . . The Iraqis will remember and will never forget that on 8/8/90 AD it [Kuwait]

became a part of Iraq, legally, constitutionally and actually . . . (Hussein, "Hussein: 'Circumstances'. . ." All).

American readers are likely to view this speech only as the desperate remarks of a loser, for "God is also on the side of the Americans and allied Arabs." American readers, whose cultural myths encourage independent, critical thinking, face a culture clash when they read such rhetoric as is found in Hussein's speech.

However, earlier official statements from Hussein and the Iraqi government had laid the foundation for such remarks to be understandable in light of Hussein's trying to convince the Iraqis that this war was a religious extension of their myth. Hussein called for a **jihād**, a holy war. If any war were fought, the Iraqi resistance could be interpreted as a **jihād**. He referred to Iraq's role as one "given to it by **God**" (Williams, "Iraq Rebuffs. . ." A1). If he is merely carrying out God's wishes, how can he be wrong? In the same article, Williams says, "One of Hussein's aides. . . told a press conference. . . 'The question is now a question of the American aggression, and violent and imperialist aggression, which is intended to destroy Iraq and subjugate the region. . . The issue of Kuwait has been used as a cover for aggression.'" Here the Iraqi leadership has used a verbal trap of sorts in its message to the people much like the old "Do you still beat your wife?" question.

They have set up the situation so that if the U.S. did not act to assist small nations in stopping Iraq's aggression, Hussein would have his way with impunity, but if the U.S. tried to stop Iraq, the U.S. was just looking for any excuse to be aggressive toward Iraq. Therefore Iraq, directed by God, is totally innocent while the U.S. and its allies, enemies of God, are totally guilty. The Iraqi argument is part of the myth of Hussein, the underdog, who, trying to serve God, is merely standing up to the bullying Americans.

The Times prints a quotation from an Iraqi in which he seems to understand Hussein's real meaning, and he supports his efforts. Fineman reports

According to Hassan Bayaji, an articulate Iraqi, '. . . Now the target is the Iraqi government, the Iraqi regime,' he said. 'They are trying to get rid of our leader and our regime, and they want to pulverize Iraq and put an end to our economic growth. . .It isn't the liberation of Kuwait. It's punishing Iraqis' ("Bomb-Weary. . ." A1+).

Fineman describes Bayaji as "articulate," which suggests that readers should pay some attention to what he says. Whereas Hussein's aide denounced America for its aggression, Bayaji gives evidence to support his argument that the U.S. is punishing Iraqis. It is not so difficult for American readers to understand Bayaji's opinion, because America was

trying to get rid of the leader and his regime. And Iraqis were punished indirectly, for they had to endure the embargo, the disruption of water and power, and the deaths of Iraqi citizens. The Times' printing of Bahaji's remarks as a quote in Fineman's story provides its readers with an Iraqi citizen's heartfelt complaint to show the Iraqi people's position toward the war.

The Iraqis were also sensitive to how the American press treated Hussein. After various reports were printed in the U.S. calling Saddam a pathologically narcissistic megalomaniac, we find similar name-calling directed at Bush that tries to shift blame toward Bush as the evil scapegoat and away from allied Arab nations, members of the coalition

'George Bush is a stupid contrary boy,' one radio broadcast said. 'It would have been possible to overlook this except for the fact that this **madman**, who suffers from **megalomania** and the **insanity** of war, destruction and aggression is the President of the United States' (Gerstenzang and Williams, "Ground War. . ." Al+).

For his own people, Hussein singles out Bush as the true enemy, and he shows he can discredit the American leader with the same accusations as have been used against him. To the Iraqis, their leader is still putting up resistance

against their enemy, but to American readers, his remarks are likely to be understood as copycat namecalling by a desperate loser. To the Iraqis, Hussein speaks culturally accepted and understood hyperbolic rhetoric that shows he is a brave underdog, but to Americans who are not familiar with Iraqi hyperbole, his exaggeration is illogical and inflammatory. We can see here how language laced with metaphor expresses cultural myth, and that that very language, when misinterpreted by another culture, may exacerbate cultural differences.

Further argument supporting Hussein's bravery against the "American bullies" is found in comments by the previously mentioned tanker drivers. Their rationalization of Hussein's behavior shows a willingness to support Hussein's leadership in spite of the attacks they are enduring. Their myth calls for the removal of Israelis from regions of disputed land claimed by the Palestinians, and Hussein has added this belief to his reasons for resisting the United States

'Hey, did you hear?' Nimr called out to his fellow drivers and Jordanian friends when he emerged from the war zone about noon Wednesday to spread the news of the day.

'Saddam went 20 kilometers into Saudi Arabia. He took it and then gave it back. It was just to show he could do it.'

'Saddam is **God!**' shouted Abdul Ahmad, another driver who made the run Wednesday. 'Even if every single American comes here to fight, they cannot **face** him even **standing** alone.'

Such is the stuff of the emerging cult of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein (Fineman, "Cult of . . ." Al).

The Palestinian tanker drivers at last have found in Hussein someone to stand up for them. A festering injury to them is that they believe the United States has favored Israel by tolerating its occupation of land the Palestinians feel should rightfully be their homeland. To them, America is the bully.

In spite of the volume of damning evidence against Hussein and his atrocities, the Times still researched and printed an article showing an unexpected side of Hussein. According to Naim Twaina, a Jew who lived in Baghdad in 1971 and had been imprisoned, Hussein showed him mercy

'He [Hussein] came in, took a cigarette and put it in the eye of one of the Baath men,' who fainted from the pain.

Twaina thought his end had come.

But, 'He got to me and said, "Who's this? It's not a Baath member." They said, "No sir, it's a Jew, a Zionist." He

said, "No. He's a good man. I know him. Take your things and go."

' . . . It was an **hour of mercy**,' he said. 'Maybe it was because I was good with him-- I would buy from him all the time.'

. . .But Hussein has also reportedly helped the estimated 150 remaining Iraqi Jews, allowing many to leave the country.

'He's against Zionists, he's not against the Jews of Iraq,' Twaina said (Goldberg, "Jew Credits. . ." A8).

The effect of this account is complicated. It further shows Hussein as erratic in behavior--unspeakably cruel to one he deems enemy, yet tolerant of Iraqi Jews. Possibly non-Zionist Jewish readers might believe Hussein is not dangerous to them.

However, the non-critical articles about Hussein and the Iraqi leadership fail to balance the Times' news reports that, through the Iraqis' own words, continue the violent hyperbole against the United States, which is likely to antagonize American readers against Hussein. The following article by Healy and Balzar is an example

'All news reports confirm that the number of Americans killed will exceed tens of thousands,' the state-run radio said. 'This means that tens of thousands of coffins will

arrive, together with tribulations, after which [President] Bush will not be able to dodge the correspondents' questions. . .

The American people are living in a state of panic, fear and chaos' because of allied casualty rates, it said ("Cheney Hints. . ." Al+).

At that time, the broadcast was considered just a bluff and an example of more Iraqi hyperbole, but a few days later a Scud blew up barracks, burning to death 27 members of the National Guard. When Iraqi Radio brags about it, Times reporters need only to use direct quotations, and the Iraqi leadership has further alienated itself from any sympathy from the American public. No longer are Iraqis just braggarts--now they are vicious, gloating murderers, who call American youth "coward traitors." Bob Drogin and Patt Morrison quote Baghdad Radio: "Baghdad Radio hailed the attack, saying the missile struck 'the coward traitors who mortgage the sacred places of the nation. . . and turn Arab youth into **shields of flesh**'" ("Iraqi Missile . . ." Al). In a related article on the same day, Tracy Wilkinson and Nick B. Williams explain further

Before the withdrawal announcement, Baghdad Radio claimed that Hussein's forces were inflicting heavy damage on the allies and bragged about the fatal Scud attack on

the barracks in Dhahran. 'The defeated have abandoned their tanks, vehicles and equipment. . . and fled tripping over their own **feet** to escape lethal Iraqi fire,' the communique said. 'Our heroic missile corps continues to pound the coward traitors' ("Iraq Orders. . ." Al+).

The following day, Fineman explains what all of this may mean according to the Iraqi myth

But it remained unclear Tuesday whether the senior command of the Iraqi military would **buy** his claim to a victory of endurance. The senior commanders are known to have endorsed Hussein's military strategy to hold out just long enough to inflict major casualties on the allied forces, particularly the Americans.

Within the Arab context, analysts in the region said, Hussein could legitimately claim victory in the **eyes** of his supporters if **he** drew significant American **blood** before a tactical withdrawal. Several analysts said that Monday night's Scud missile attack on U.S. servicemen in Dhahran may have given Hussein enough ammunition to confront his skeptics

at home ("For Soldiers. . ." H5).

American readers are unlikely to care about Hussein's problems with his skeptics once they have read the braggadocio about the killing of the "coward traitor" Guardsmen. If drawing "significant American blood" was merely a calculated political goal for Hussein to gain favor among his critics, now readers are likely to view Hussein with contempt for his ruthlessness. No longer are Americans supporting humanistic ideals for all people; now the battle has become personal.

What other Arabs and Moslems thought of Hussein also is covered by Times writers as they quote and analyze authorities. For instance, the King of Saudi Arabia fires back at Hussein's rhetoric using the familiar blood and religion metaphors. He addresses Hussein straight on

'Why do you try to ignore the direct cause of what has happened in the Arab **arena**. . . This **injury** you have caused will continue to **bleed** for years to come. . . [you must begin] an immediate withdrawal from Kuwait to **pave the way** for the return of the normal situation. . . But who has authorized you to involve the Iraqi army and people in a **bloody** and **fruitless** war with Iran? Who authorized you to occupy Kuwait and kill its sons, rape its women, loot its property and

destroy its landmarks? No doubt **Satan** and your **covetousness** have urged you to do so at the **expense** of the Arab gulf countries which were proud of the Iraqi army' (Murphy, "Fahd Tells. . ." A6).

The effect on American readers may be that they can dispense with gnawing doubts at the correctness of their cause after reading another Arab's condemnation of Hussein.

Lamb, in an analytical article, pulls the opposing attitudes toward Hussein together by using the Dracula metaphor again

. . . he [Saddam] has cast his country into bankruptcy and a war that his army, the world's fourth largest, cannot win. Against him, in addition to the U.S.-led Western coalition stand the only three Arab influences on the Middle East's balance of power: Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Syria. Their presence alone represents a **spike driven into the heart** of so-called Arab unity ("Once Again. . ." A22).

Readers will find Lamb's argument that Iraq cannot win believable, for he supports it with strong evidence. If they agree, they will probably willingly accept the "spike driven in the heart" metaphor as suiting the awfulness of Hussein's aggression toward his neighbors.

The accuracy of the preceding two reports about the effect on the people of the region is played out in several articles as the surrendering Iraqi POWs also explain their disgust with Hussein and his war. They bore the brunt of the allied attacks while their leader hid in sophisticated bunkers and used his troops like cannon fodder much as many modern leaders continue to do

'What he [Hussein] told us [Iraqi POWs], that Arab countries were going to invade us and take our sisters and mothers and families, it's not true,' the man complained. 'We hope the victor will be the Saudis. It's senseless that our young people are going to get killed. . . As soon as they came, we told them we didn't want to fight,' he said. 'As soon as we **raised our hands**, they welcomed us. . . I was captured by our **brother** Saudis' (Murphy, "Arab Forces. . ." Al+).

No articles speculate on how these same troops would have reacted had they been the victors, so readers are left to assume the POWs are against Hussein rather than just saying what they think will save their lives. Drogin adds more a few days later

Most important, perhaps, all [Iraqi POWs] are furious that Hussein **sacrificed**

the world's fourth-largest Army--and brought devastation and humiliation to his country--for nothing.

'He destroy all Iraq, and the army,' said Ahmad M., a wounded infantryman.

**"Inshallah, God will crush him.'**

'From Aug. 2, I thought this war would be the same result as happened-- a disaster,' said Mahadi M., a 43-year-old Iraqi warrant officer. 'Saddam, he is a **crazy** man. A **lunatic**."

Despite the punishment, the POWs say Iraq's army was so demoralized that 50% of some units, including the supposedly elite Republican Guard, had deserted by the time the ground war began ("Iraqi POWs. . ." Al+).

But even more damning evidence against Hussein's leadership is found in Richter and Chen's report. They tell of Iraqi troops being slaughtered by their own officers. Allied forces say many Iraq POWs are begging their captors not to repatriate them, and their fears may be understandable. They know Hussein as a man who executed officers for retreating during the Iran-Iraq War, and who more recently dispatched

execution squads to shoot front-line soldiers who would not fight allied forces ("POWs Begging. . ." A1).

Healy interviewed a sociologist who shed additional light on an Arabic cultural trait that contradicts Hussein's description of his soldiers as martyrs for Allah

Sociologist Yohoshefat Harkabi, who analyzed Egypt's defeat in the 1967 Six-Day War for Israeli intelligence, argues that Arab fighting forces lack cohesion--a reflection of a culture in which Arab men are divided from one another by suspicion and hostility.

'Because of this defect in the social **fabric**, each Arab soldier, in the critical moments of combat, finds himself fighting not as a member of a team, but as an abandoned individual,' Harkabi wrote in his analysis. 'Consequently, each individual tends primarily to look after himself, and the unit disintegrates' ("In Face. . ." A8+).

The effect of these stories detailing abuse of Iraqi soldiers by their own officers and lack of cohesiveness of military units is likely to further convince readers that "our cause is just," for the Iraqi soldiers appear to share

no dedication to what Hussein has been telling them is their cause. Other Arabs provide readers additional arguments against Hussein, but they show compassion for the Iraqi people who, they seem to think, suffer under such a leader. Gosaibi, a Saudi interviewed by Murphy, sums up how many non-Iraqi Arabs feel about Hussein's leadership

'What did Saddam Hussein offer the Iraqis in 25 years of rule? Persecution, terror, mass executions, eight years of war, another new war. What did he bring to them? He did not bring them prosperity, not happiness. Only terror and sadness. No nation, no people are so **masochistic** as to love such a leader' ("Ghazi al . . ." M3).

An Arab-American critic of the allied effort, Sermid Al-Sarrof, argues that Hussein cold-bloodedly calculated and used for propaganda value the air attacks which caused collateral damage, yet subtly, Al-Sarrof shifts the blame in the Iraqi-Kuwaiti situation to the allies for not being more sensitive to the suffering of the Iraqi people

Saddam Hussein calculatedly camouflages civilian areas as military areas or vice versa. Everyone seems to understand this, but people don't seem to be sensitive to that. They understand that he is not

concerned about casualties. He's not concerned about the lives of his people. Unfortunately, the allies have been willing to **play into that game**. And they've inflicted severe casualties on civilians. No matter their best intentions, they have inflicted a **toll** on Iraqi people. At the same time, they expect the Iraqi people to forgive them ("World Didn't. . ." B7).

Here, Al-Sarrof has shown readers that if the U.S. had better understood Hussein's trickery and been more sensitive to the needs of the people of Iraq caught in the middle, maybe the Americans could have devised a better way to deal with Hussein.

But more vitriolic is Rashid I. Khalidi, who accuses the Americans directly of meddling in Arab business

It may be argued that it doesn't matter what people in the Arab world think of the United States: Americans know that they are right and strong enough to impose their will on those who disagree. It may well be that Arab grievances over the devastation wrought by 95,000 allied air sorties, directed mainly against targets in the cities and towns of Iraq, will eventually be forgotten without leaving lasting **scars**.

And perhaps the United States will avoid **succumbing** to its **long-standing** tendency to meddle in other people's domestic affairs (always justified, of course, by the highest **moral** purposes), and will leave the Iraqis to their own devices after the war ("Arab Hearts. . ." B7).

This bitter attack will jog readers' comfortable acceptance of America's involvement in Middle Eastern business. They will be forced to rethink whether their cultural beliefs are moral. Is Hussein really a monster? Are American forces liberating the people of Iraq as well as Kuwaitis? Would the United States be involved at all if it weren't for oil interests in Kuwait? Is the United States passing off business interests as human rights concerns? Thoughtful readers will likely feel some discomfort as they try to answer these questions.

Arab-American women are represented in a Times report by Kathleen Hendrix who tells how Arab women in the United States struggle with their split loyalties. They may be Times readers too, and by running an article which shows sensitivity to their position, the Times gives voice to their unique position. They

described rage at what was being done to Arabs: of women and children being de-humanized with phrases like '**collateral**

**damage'**: of the **double standard** they say Americans use to **measure** Arabs and Israelis; of ambivalence about their own feelings towards the war and Saddam Hussein; of dual loyalties as Americans and Arabs; of being hurt by "Nuke Iraq" bumper stickers and T-shirts; of perplexity and worry as mothers ("Fears From. . ." El+).

The idea of mothers worrying about loved ones in time of war is as old as history, and American mothers whose sons may be in the war zone can surely feel empathy for the Arab-American women. The article humanizes the conflict, in contrast to the military language used in press briefings which dehumanizes war.

In an article by Kenneth Reich, a final quote tries to sum up the Arab-American position

Nazih Bayda, regional director of the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee, spoke for many when he said: 'First of all, everybody is relieved that the Kuwaiti people are back in their own country. . . I hope now that the United States and the rest of the allied forces will work on **winning** the **hearts and minds** of the Arab masses and implementing U.N. resolutions to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian

issue.'

As for Iraq, [Saud, an Iraqi-American] Cano asserted, 'The Iraqi population is very sophisticated and smart. . . I'm confident they have learned from this. They learned the **hard way** that war **does not pay**, and they're probably going to have to make some changes in their form of government' ("Arab-Americans. . ." A13).

By reading these quotations of Arab-Americans, readers can feel a sense of justification of America's correctness on the issues underlying the war. Americans could tell themselves they did the right thing, but most realized the "Palestinian issue" must be settled. And the Iraqis have learned their lesson. Hussein led them into another destructive war that was not the solution to their problems.

It would be difficult for a critic of the Times to find legitimate complaint concerning the scope of coverage of Moslem and Arab concerns in the Gulf War. While the Times' foreign correspondents, with differing familial and religious cultural backgrounds, cannot be totally objective in their reportage, neither can anyone else. Therefore, readers must assume some responsibility for interpreting the variety of reportage. Ideally, readers would try to remain open-minded, yet understand and acknowledge the effect of their own cultural myths on their reactions to the news.

The Times does print a quantity of articles attempting to reflect the Arab point of view. Times reporters, some more objective than others, write from many angles and include many quotes from Arabs which represent varying points of view. Add to that the number of articles by Arab authors which express several points of view, and we have a newspaper that tries to provide comprehensive and sophisticated coverage. Bear in mind that the Times, as a viable business, must deal with the fact that American readers want to see their myths expressed. If they don't, the paper will lose readers as well as advertizers. When special interest groups do not see their myths expressed as fully as they wish and then complain about it, we can see the impossibility of any newspaper successfully pleasing all readers. Yet the very quality and quantity of reportage on any major issue printed by the Times is challenging and thorough enough for most American readers of varying cultural backgrounds.

\* \* \*

We see that on a subject as gigantic as warfare, the Times has tried to print information and opinion on both sides of the conflict. While the reporters' own myths are bound to influence their approach to the news they are covering, we must also acknowledge that there can be no objective reportage. The very volume of articles written by a variety of male and female writers of many ethnic origins

provides a reasonable spectrum of information from which readers must assume responsibility in agreeing with or rejecting the information according to their own personal cultural myths.

The perceived facts and issues of the Persian Gulf conflict are complex. We have seen that at the very center of our disagreements as human beings are the ways we see and understand things. These can differ dramatically because of our varying histories and how our myths are formed, expressed, and acted on due to our language and its variety of figurative and metaphoric expressions.

## In Summary

From this examination of how the Los Angeles Times reported on the Persian Gulf Conflict of 1991, we can arrive at some important conclusions. First, the commonly held belief that the news is "just the facts" is entirely too simplistic. Second, of the multitude of newsworthy historic events that newspapers cover, the subject of war is certainly one of the most highly charged. When nations resort to war, ordinary communication ceases. Rather than opposing parties using the force of logic, they resort to the logic of force. As the warring sides use language to explain their use of force, their different histories and cultural myths are expressed, providing important clues about why the conflict exists. Additionally, these myths are suffused with metaphoric expressions that reveal how each side perceives the idea it is expressing.

Times reportage reflects these mythical forces behind events and includes an array of metaphoric language, both in reporters' own texts and in words of persons quoted.

We have found that because these myths are embodied in language, and because we understand through metaphorical concepts, that there is no objective language. If there is no verbal expression of absolute truth in political affairs, especially regarding warfare, then no newspaper can possibly be totally unbiased or objective, for readers will apply

their own "reading" to the signifiers and syntagms of the writers, that is to say, their understanding of what is signified. And, of course, the writers will have written their texts from their own mythical perspectives using metaphors that shape as well as express their own beliefs. All that can be hoped for in seeking truth in verbal expression is through a reasonable understanding of the "common sense," or common beliefs of any culture. As Barthes explains, "Writing is precisely that space in which the persons of grammar and the origins of discourse mingle, combine, and lose each other until they are unidentifiable: writing is the truth not of the person (of the author), but of language" (Semiotic Challenge 8). As writers are limited by the constraints of structure, vocabulary, and metaphor used in verbal expression, they are also limited by their own personal histories as they try to express "common sense." All verbal expression becomes another entity beyond syntax, vocabulary, myth, and metaphor, which Barthes calls simply "language." As writers use language, they are also used by that language, for its very nature alters (limits or adds to, and hence, changes) their original felt sense.

In this study, we have examined what Barthes means as he explains the importance of our cultural myths--how we understand political events as a result of our personal and community histories and beliefs. By examining the ideas of

George Lakoff, Mark Johnson, and Mark Turner, we have seen how they identify various metaphorical concepts that enable us to interpret events through the filter of comparisons that are so embedded in our language, we are often not even aware of their use, yet they affect our cultural myths. Lakoff and Turner in More than Cool Reason, have asserted that this figurative language has power to affect our behavior.

For the same reasons that schemas and metaphors give us power to conceptualize and reason, so they have power over us. Anything that we rely on constantly, unconsciously, and automatically is so much part of us that it cannot be easily resisted, in large measure because it is barely even noticed. To the extent that we use a conceptual schema or a conceptual metaphor, we accept its validity. Consequently, when someone else uses it, we are predisposed to accept its validity. For this reason, conventionalized schemas and metaphors have persuasive power over us (63).

This is disturbing when we realize that in the reportage of the Persian Gulf War we have found that the language of war is a weapon itself. We have seen how the U.S. government

and military sought to detoxify the horror of suffering and death by deliberately dehumanizing the targets with the **war is a machine** metaphor. On both sides, the enemy had to be **demonized** with language strong enough to unite people against a common foe. Both sides insisted **God** was on their side, using religious references to validate their positions. Both sides endured the horror of **bloodshed** and the awful finality of **loss of life**.

We found that metaphors could be categorized by placing them in an ever widening circle (see Diagram of Metaphorical Subjects, p. 42). Beginning in the center with heart and blood, figures we understand are essential to life, we move outward to other body parts, then to metaphors using bodily responses. Outside the body entirely, we find metaphors of home and its near environment which preserve the body, then outward further to the social interaction and work of people. Beyond these, we find metaphors dealing with political affairs of people in their cultural groups, and in the outermost circle, we find metaphors dealing with people's ethical values and spirituality. Our metaphoric system shows us that we see the world from an egocentric position; we understand what is going on outside of ourselves in relation to how it affects our personal cultural histories.

From our basis of myth and metaphorical concepts, we form meanings with which we frame our understanding, and hence, our behavior. An understanding of how variable our

myths can be should enable us to be tolerant of beliefs different from ours. However, some critics of the press, such as Noam Chomsky, use their own myths as benchmarks by which to measure differing ideologies.

In Language and Politics, Chomsky argues that the media as a business is controlled by a privileged sector that owns and runs society. He says ". . .we discover that the media tends to present an overwhelming picture of the world that conforms to the interest and needs of the sectors of the population it serves and represents" (536). He claims the "privileged educated elites. . . The journalists, the academics, the teachers, the public relations specialists . . . have an institutional task, and that is to create the system of beliefs which will ensure the effective engineering of consent" (671). He calls this indoctrination (725) and says "The only advice I can offer is the obvious thing--telling people the truth. Bring them the news that they aren't getting. Give them the kind of analyses they are not receiving. . . I think people can be reached with critical analyses and truths that are generally hidden from them" (537). Chomsky does not say who is the bearer of this "truth" and who may "reach" the people. What Chomsky calls the "system of beliefs" to which "elites" must be sure others "consent," is a way of describing other myths with which he disagrees. Most Times readers would not agree that they have been indoctrinated.

However, the subtle effect of metaphorical structures in language may have power to influence readers' thinking and actions more than conscious efforts at "engineering consent."

From the Times' Persian Gulf War reporting, we have identified many metaphorical concepts in common use in language, and of course, in use by reporters. These metaphorical concepts help to frame the meaning that readers will gather from the reportage.

With these metaphorical concepts suffusing language, we have discovered evidence of the similarities and differences in mythical approaches to the war. As countries differ greatly in their histories, religions, beliefs in human rights and responsibility for the good of the rest of the world, great gulfs of ignorance of one another can separate cultures. Reporter Fineman writes of Jordan's Prince Hassan, who seems to understand the nature of the mythical clashes

He [Jordan's Prince Hassan] said Hussein, for his part, did not understand the Americans because he was listening as well as speaking in 'vernacular Iraqi, which more often than not was badly translated.' . . . Thus, there was 'a clash of idiom, culture, of mentality. . . right up to the point of the 15th of January ("What's Next. . ." A1+).

While the Times does little to identify these cultural

differences as myth, this examination has identified, through how language has been used, two prominent cultural myths--the American, and Iraqi/Arab. Each myth is revealed through similar metaphorical language, yet cultural beliefs cause differing interpretations of those metaphors.

Because newswriting is by nature formulaic, reductive, and often written under pressure of deadlines, and because each writer cannot help but write within his or her own myth, no one story can be isolated as a representative of the entire Times. However, because of its size (approximately forty foreign correspondents), the Times can cover major stories from several angles by several different reporters, creating a larger contextual background for the events and meanings of any one happening. Readers must, then, assume responsibility to read comprehensively, assimilate, and interpret the material as fairly as they can according to their own myth.

This study shows that Times reportage of the Persian Gulf War represented the majority-held American myth, but presented alternate perspectives on the war's events and politics. While unvarnished support for the allied position could be found in many articles, stories expressing Arab views were presented to outline the cultural conflicts behind the war. In one particularly poignant statement, Gerstanzang and Williams quote Vitaly N. Ignatenko of the Kremlin who expresses, "'We will not express our censure,'

[he said] 'but only regret over the fact that the world today turned out to be incapable of solving this problem by peaceful means'" ("Ground War. . ." Al+). That even one person can die because of inadequate communication from another suggests that the human race still is quite primitive in effecting a harmonious environment for the heart, blood, bodies, and homes of ordinary people. We have seen in Times reportage how the power of language describes our cultural myth and moved our country, when language failed, to take physical action against Iraq after Iraq's myth, as spelled out by Hussein, quit language in favor of force.

As Barthes explains, we may share the same words, but we will never be able to share the same personal histories behind those words, therefore our understanding of words and sentences will always be a little different from everyone else's. If disagreeing parties would approach opponents first with an understanding of the nature of language, and second, with respect for each other's cultural myth, both sides should be able to settle disagreements using communication. However, for disagreeing parties to hang on to the wrongs of the past impedes full progress into the future.

The more readers of the Times understand the nature of language, myth, and the reductive style of news reportage, the better they will interpret what they read. Our struggle

for understanding will never reach perfection, for we cannot see through each other's eyes. But as we even acknowledge this much, we have made progress.

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