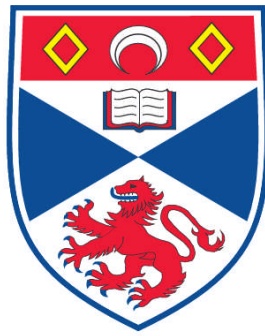# AL QAEDA'S IDEOLOGY THROUGH POLITICAL MYTH AND RHETORIC

M. A. Ashraf

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St. Andrews

2012

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Al Qaeda's Ideology Through Political Myth and Rhetoric

Submitted by M A ASHRAF

for the Degree of PhD in International Relations from the School of International Relations, St Andrews University.

July, 2011

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Abstract

This Thesis develops and applies a theoretical framework to understand Al Qaeda's ideology. A concept of ideology comprising a number of political myths, shaped through rhetoric is the central feature of this research. The Thesis tests the theory that extremist ideologies emerge out of social and political crises and postulates that the primary components of ideology are a number of political myths created in the context of historical, theological and political factors. These myths and other components of ideology are given form through rhetoric and the rhetorical styles and techniques employed, in turn, shape ideology. Rhetorical analysis is carried out to identify aspects of Al Qaeda's ideology, particularly in the construction of political myth. Analysis of the relationship between textuality and political style reveals that while Al Qaeda adopts republican attitudes to political debate, its textual style most closely matches the texts of modern revolutionary terrorists and reveals a great deal about its dual reliance on horrific violence and reasoned discourse. The rhetorical influences on Al Qaeda's main ideologue are examined to reveal how they shape its ideology.

The research fills a gap in academic analysis of terrorism in general and ideology in particular by providing a novel framework to identify the roots, causes, beliefs and trajectories of a particular seam of political thought. Specifically, it identifies Al Qaeda as an extreme and inevitable manifestation of Islamist political ideology, which in turn was a reaction to a number of modern political and social crises and ideas. The political myths that comprise Al Qaeda's ideology are inherited from mainstream Islamism and are open to critical challenge. However, its motivations and strategies are driven by its primary ideologues' perception of their political and conflict experiences. The belief that Muslim countries are ruled by unrepresentative and ineffective regimes subservient to the West and the belief that through asymmetric tactics such as terrorism it is possible to destroy a superpower are the two driving forces that sustain Al Qaeda's ideology. These perceptions are less susceptible to critical debate and may only change after a transformation of political reality; when convincing changes have occurred in the nature of regimes in the Muslim world and when Al Qaeda's political aims of defeating the West are demonstrably unachievable.

Contents

Introduction

The Need to Understand Al Qaeda's Ideology

The 9/11 Commission final report states that the attacks of September 11, 2001 on New York and Washington were conducted by terrorists with a specific agenda derived from "*a radical ideological movement (commonly known as Islamism or radical Islam) in the Islamic world … which has spawned terrorist groups and violence across the globe.*"[1] This identification of an ideological dimension led some to suggest "*the war on terror is also a war of ideas.*"[2] The Report, however, does not define what it means by ideology and whilst it describes some of Al Qaeda's objectives and reasons for action, it gives very little insight into what constitutes its ideology let alone how it emerged and how it could be confronted.

In part, the confusion over the nature of Al Qaeda reflects a historical propensity in academic study of terrorism to concentrate on the act of political violence rather than on the ideological drivers for it. Ideology, if mentioned at all, is used loosely as a label for a list of strategic or political objectives or as a generic identifier for particular ideas such as martyrdom. In a recent and incisive analysis of terrorism research, Magnus Ranstorp identifies many gaps and weaknesses in the study of terrorism; ideology is not one of them, despite him using the term on a few occasions.[3] He comes close to championing the need to examine Al Qaeda's ideology when he applauds David Leheny for constructively recommending, "*that symbolism, strategic signalling and social movement theory could offer a useful vehicle to more closely connect the sphere of international relations scholarship and terrorism studies.*"[4] Others, such as Jeffrey Cozzens, also make a valuable contribution to ideological aspects by exposing the role that function, culture and grand strategy play in Al Qaeda's warfare.[5] These are nevertheless fragmentary approaches to an ideological model for Al Qaeda. No coherent framework has been applied, or possibly exists, to identify the causes and components of an extreme political ideology and how that ideology is articulated.   Although, like the 9/11 Commission

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[1] *The 9/11 Commision Report* . (2004) New York : W.W. Norton & Company.
[2] Hillel, F., & Haqqani, H. (2005, February). Islamism and Terrorism: The Ideological Dimension. *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology* , 1.
[3] Ranstorp, M. (Ed.). (2007). *Mapping Terrorism Research.* Abingdon: Routledge.
[4] *Ibid*. p.3.
[5] Ibid. p.127-163

Report, many have situated Al Qaeda's ideology within the wider Islamist or fundamentalist worldview, there is no credible analysis of how ideas from these wider movements are absorbed or adapted by Al Qaeda.

This Thesis accepts the premise that Al Qaeda is primarily an ideological movement. How true is that premise? What is meant by ideology? And what is the nature of Al Qaeda's ideology? These are the main questions it aims to answer. An understanding of Al Qaeda's ideology is necessary in the short term to prosecute what has been variously described as the 'war of ideas' within the Global War on Terror. Specifically, it is necessary to understand the degree to which Al Qaeda's ideology can survive the elimination of its physical components such as key leaders and training facilities.

In the meantime, it is necessary to describe Al Qaeda and to acknowledge that the idea of it having an ideology is contested. The reasons for so little work having been done in this area and the paucity of suitable theoretical frameworks are issues that also deserve exploration. Finally, it is necessary to outline a suitable framework and structure for this research.

What is Al Qaeda?

In common usage Al Qaeda is often depicted as an organisation or group. However, in terms of its outlook, strategy and actions it is based on ideas shared to varying degrees by various Islamic extremist groups, and elements of Muslim society. Some of these ideas are common in non-extremist groups in Muslim society as well as in Western political thinking. Al Qaeda therefore draws from a complex and wide ranging set of sources. Whilst Osama bin Laden and his immediate associates comprise a group that is readily identified as Al Qaeda, its worldview extends to a plethora of political extremist[6] groups spread throughout the world and labelled variously as Islamists,[7] radical fundamentalist, Salafist and jihadi. Most of these groups act in sympathy with Al Qaeda's doctrine; they often attribute their actions to Al Qaeda and sometimes speak for Al Qaeda. Some, such as Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, have been formally affiliated to Al Qaeda, while others such as the al-Shabaab

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[6] Extremists or extremism is used throughout this Thesis to connote those individuals or non-state actors that advocate or employ illegal violence in the pursuit of their political objectives.

[7] Islamists or Islamism is used throughout this Thesis to identify those Muslim individuals or parties that are primarily political, who make no distinction between religion and politics and who aspire to establish a state that is based on their conception of Islamic law (*sharia*).

of Somalia remain overtly independent. This presents a challenge in identifying the source of Al Qaeda's ideology. The words of Osama bin Laden and his immediate associates clearly have greater authority and prominence in what could be identified as Al Qaeda's ideology but articulation of the ideology is not restricted to any single individual or group. Rather, it is an evolving common worldview shared by a number of radical extremist Muslim organisations. Identifying those who legitimately articulate Al Qaeda's ideology, therefore, requires a degree of judgement and assumption.

Does Al Qaeda Have an Ideology?

How can Al Qaeda's ideology be defined and determined? Sebestyén Gorka makes a characteristically narrow interpretation of ideology in concluding that Al Qaeda is:

> *".... Not an ideology in the sense of ideology that we are used to since it is largely informed by religion, which is not something we associate with ideology and because its adherents are far too heterogeneous in the beliefs that they hold."[8]*

Gorka's statement raises a number of basic questions. Is ideology informed only by secular or scientific ideas? What is the relationship between ideology and religion? Is heterogeneity of belief an exclusion from ideology? The exotic nature of Al Qaeda's ideological discourse, particularly the extensive use of a theology that overtly appears alien to a Western mindset may be partly responsible for Gorka's exclusion of Al Qaeda's beliefs and aspirations from the realm of ideology. The view may also partly arise out of the apparent irrationality of Al Qaeda's behaviour. As Keynes may have put it, do Al Qaeda's "*madmen in authority*" distil "*their frenzy from academic scribbler of a few years back?*"[9]

Two challenges arise out of these views. The first is to explore the meaning of ideology, to understand what it is, how it is communicated and how it influences people. A suitable definition will flow from that process. In the meantime, it is sufficient to accept Gamble's assessment that "*Ideologies are a crucial resource for ordering, defining and evaluating political reality and establishing political identities.*"[10] Even a cursory assessment of Al Qaeda's claims indicates it is primarily a political movement. For example, in a preface to a

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[8] Gorka, S. L. (2006, May 2-5). Al Qaeda and Von Clausewitz – Rediscovering the Art of War. *A Paper delivered to the US Joint Special Operations University*. 4. Hurlburt Field, Florida. p.4.
[9] Keynes, M. J. (1965). *The general theory of employment, interest and money*. New York: Macmillan. p.383.
[10] Quoted in Heywood, A. (2003). *Political Ideologies - An Introduction*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. p.xvi.

training manual, Al Qaeda sees its interaction with its adversaries in secular, political and hence ideological terms:

> *"The confrontation that we are calling for with the apostate regimes does not know Socratic debates…, Platonic ideals…, nor Aristotelian diplomacy. But it knows the dialogue of bullets, the ideals of assassination, bombing, and destruction, and the diplomacy of the cannon and machine-gun."*[11]

As such Al Qaeda lays claim to the sources of Western political philosophy and attempts to place the blame for its use of violence on its adversaries' alleged failure to conduct diplomatic debate on the basis of these principles. Al Qaeda does not, however, label itself as an ideological movement. To do so would undermine its credibility because ideology in many contexts has a negative connotation, because it suggests a constructed rather than a revealed manifesto and because it wants to make a claim to authentic Islam and, as an Islamist movement, it cannot discriminate between religion and politics. This reluctance of self-identification with ideology contrasts with Al Qaeda's objectives that are primarily political and its behaviour, which is recognisable political rhetoric. On the basis of many of its statements and most of its actions Al Qaeda is therefore an ideology, at least in the sense that Gamble describes it. This conclusion will be explored in more detail throughout the Thesis.

The second challenge is to explore the extent to which Al Qaeda's ideology encompasses orthodox political ideas and the extent to which it is indeed exotic. That requires comparative analysis across the broad range of general features that constitute ideology as well as the specific components of its articulated beliefs.

Al Qaeda has not articulated its worldview or manifesto in the equivalent of Mein Kampf or the Green Book; but it has managed to establish one of the largest coalitions of terrorist organisations the world has ever known. These organisations originate from almost every continent and are linguistically and culturally diverse. This distinctive feature is a mark of Al Qaeda's ability to universalise and globalise its message. In so doing, it relies less on the conventional revolutionary method of indoctrination as a means of changing the beliefs of its target audience and more on harnessing the common

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[11] Al Qaeda. (2000). *Military Studies in the Jihad Against the Tyrants'' (also known as the 'Manchester (UK) Manual')*. Retrieved April 2, 2008 from http://www.thesmokinggun.com/archive/jihadmanual.html

political grievances, myths and values within its primary target audience - the Muslim community in general and the Islamists in particular. An understanding of its ideology cannot, therefore, be achieved either without an understanding of the political crises that cause grievances in Muslims or without an understanding of relevant elements of theological doctrine as espoused by Islamists and fundamentalists. More precisely, Al Qaeda's ideology has to be seen in the light of the common historical, political and theological heritage of its associated groups and of Muslim society in general.

It is worth noting that Al Qaeda's adherents are not restricted to Muslims. Its message has also attracted a small but significant number of converts from the West, mostly amongst the disenfranchised and isolated individuals and communities such as Black and Jewish communities. Exploring Al Qaeda's ideology can throw some light on how it has succeeded in attracting followers from apparently unlikely backgrounds.

Ideology or thought never arises in a vacuum, but is organically connected to and conditioned by a set of conceptual, social and historical precedents and processes.[12] In other words, ideology is shaped by cultural and political crisis through history. As Karl Mannheim would have put it, the 'particular' ideology of Al Qaeda has to be considered in the context of the 'total' ideology or worldview (*Weltanschauung*) of its wider adherents. Al Qaeda's particular ideology is therefore shaped by its interaction with its target audiences (its adherents as well as its opponents). To study ideology in this sense is, to a large degree, to study intellectual history. However, "*Intellectual history does not follow a specific method of analysis.*"[13] That is to say, "*Intellectual history is not a whole. It has no governing problematique.*"[14] On that basis most international relations theoretical approaches may be rendered inappropriate as well as hypothesis based purely on the study of terrorism. Another limitation of conventional theoretical approaches is that they tend to provide only a monochromatic test. For example, John Gray's[15] assessment of Al Qaeda in terms of modernity and positivism succeeds in making a persuasive case for it to be considered a modern ideology. His thesis debunks Gorka's claim that Al Qaeda does not have an ideology as well as diminishing the extent to which its ideology

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[12] Op. Cit., Heywood, A. (2003). p.5.
[13] Darnton, R. (1980). Intellectual and Cultural History. In M. Kammen (Ed.), *The past before Us: Contemporary Historical Writing in the United States*. Ithaca. p.337.
[14] Abu-Rabi, I. M. (1996). *Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence in the Modern Arab World* . New York: State University of New York press. p.3.
[15] Gray, J. (2003). *Al Qaeda and what it means to be Modern.* London: Faber and Faber.

could be considered exotic. However, Gray's theoretical framework is less well placed to describe the components of belief that comprise the ideology and as well as their causes. Consequently, analysis of Al Qaeda's ideology requires a more comprehensive approach.

Literature Survey

Literature supporting this study can loosely be divided into four groups. The first group contains statements by Al Qaeda, the second is analysis of the Al Qaeda phenomena by journalists, government officials and academics. The third covers literature on Islamist extremism, politics and history, whilst the fourth category addresses the broader topics of religious extremism, theology and political philosophy. Within these groups, there are publications that deal with historical, geographical and psychological dimensions.

Given the absence of any Al Qaeda publication dealing specifically with the subject, ideology can only be distilled from the various statements and interviews given by Osama bin Laden and his close associates. There can be no objective definition of who constitutes a 'close associate', and so an informed judgement based on identifying influential ideologues in the movement is necessary. Furthermore, as the ideology relies on commonly held beliefs within parts of the Muslim community, its true meaning and effectiveness needs to be judged by considering both the statements made and the reaction of those who are receptive to the message.

Al Qaeda articulates its ideology through its words and deeds. Both are targeted at a global audience. Consequently, all Al Qaeda statements are published or broadcast through international media and the Internet. This is the primary means by which it articulates its goals, strategies and tactics and is the way that it motivates and unifies its followers. The USA's relentless pursuit of Al Qaeda's leadership has meant that first-hand access for interviews or discussion has been nearly impossible since the mid-nineties. Previously, journalists such as Robert Fisk had the opportunity to interview Osama bin Laden at length. Although a few senior figures are in detention, interviews of detainees are likely to provide material of limited accuracy and utility. Mounting allegations of torture and coercion of detainees further renders the use of their evidence unreliable and possibly unethical. Furthermore, the vast majority of detainees are not ideologues but foot soldiers who at best provide an insight into how elements of the ideology is interpreted by them as individuals but not necessarily into what the ideology

actually is. The totality of Al Qaeda's statements, therefore, provides the most suitable source for analysis. They are essentially Al Qaeda's manifesto, strategy and rationale.

The Forsvarets Forskningsinstitutt (Norwegian Defence Research Establishment) has produced compilations of interviews, statements and documentation containing statements from bin Laden and close associates between 1990-2002[16] and 2002-2004. These compendiums are based on interviews and video and audiotape transcripts. They are produced as research tools and will be used as a "primary" source for analysis of Al Qaeda's doctrine. "*What Does Al Qaeda Want?*" by Robert Malin IV[17] and Bruce Lawrence's "*Messages to the World*"[18] translate similar statements but additionally contain brief insightful commentaries that are a valuable source of analysis.

The value of these sources is mitigated by the inevitable loss of subtlety in meaning during translation from the original Arabic to English. Arabic is especially sensitive to such losses as it relies greatly on metaphor and idiom to convey emotional intelligence. Specifically, Islamic extremists have developed their "*own specialized terminology (mustalahat) and slogans (shi'arat), as found in other religions and ideologies.*"[19] For these reasons, textual analysis techniques have been ruled out as too time-consuming and possibly unreliable to apply to translations. Al Qaeda is, however, reliant on translation of its material into English and other languages in its global communications and is increasingly producing its own translations. It is reasonable to assume that any loss of subtlety in meaning during translations will not significantly affect the conclusions of this work.

A peculiarity of Al Qaeda is that its challenge to the nation state is not just in the political and security dimensions. It also poses an intellectual challenge. It has tested states' abilities to analyse and understand it as a phenomenon and to respond to the threat it poses. In terms of providing information on the terror network, states have proved to be less capable than independent journalists and intellectuals. William Dalrymple describes the situation as: "*the most accurate information about Islamic extremism is coming not from governments nor intelligence agencies, but from specialist journalists and*

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[16] Hegghammer, T. (2003). *Documentation On Al-Qa'ida - Interviews, Statements and Other Primary Sources, 1990-2002.* Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI). Kjeller, Norway: Norwegian Defence Research Establishment.
[17] Malin IV, R. O. (2004). *What Does al-Qaeda Want?* Berkeley, CA.: North Atlantic Books.
[18] Lawrence, B. (2005). *Messages To The World – The Statements of Osama bin Laden.* London: Verso.
[19] Dekmejian, H. (1995). *Islam in Revolutions.* Syracuse University Press. p.53.

scholars."[20] Therefore, much of the reference material is new, evolving and based on journalistic and academic sources rather than official government ones.

At the start of this research no publication dealt exclusively with Al Qaeda's ideology. John Gray's book[21] comes close to concentrating on the ideological dimension. Gray uses a broad range of historical and philosophical examples to support his hypothesis that Al Qaeda is more a product of modernity than a revival of some ancient Middle Eastern idea. He proposes that Saint-Simon and Comte had a virtually religious faith in science being the answer to humanity's needs. Their secular religion is the ideological source of both global capitalism and totalitarianism. Gray's hypothesis is well argued, however, its singularity, succeeds in revealing more about post-modern Western civilization than it does about Al Qaeda's belief systems and how they influence the world. Paul Berman's 'Terrorism and Liberalism' adopts a similar approach by drawing parallels between Al Qaeda and characters in Victor Hugo's play, Hirnani. The play glorifies murder and suicide as a necessary part of the struggle for human freedom. Tariq Ali's 'Clash of Fundamentalisms' and Anonymous' 'Through Our Enemy's Eyes' provide useful and pertinent (albeit sometimes conflicting) analogies between Al Qaeda's behaviour and beliefs and those of Western leaders and governments.

Many books and articles directly or indirectly touch on ideological issues. Gunaratna's *"Inside Al Qaeda"*[22] provides a great deal of information on the organization's history, personalities and operations, albeit the provenance of some of his material is unclear. He specifically addresses ideology in one chapter, covering aspects of belief, worldview and strategy. His style, however, is narrative based and little of the underlying analysis and information sources are revealed making his assessment of Al Qaeda's ideology superficial at best and open to criticism. Burke provides a contrasting view to Gunaratna's image of a disciplined structured network by suggesting that Al Qaeda exists as *"merely a very small, amorphous hard core of violently nihilistic Islamists who have married bin Laden's financial resources with an ability to tap the skills and support of a vast and diverse network of freelance Islamic radicals."*[23] His analysis of the national origins of activists, their choice of training centres and their general area of operation

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[20] Dalrymple, W. (2003, July 20). Review of Al-Qaeda Casting a Shadow of Terror by Jason Burke. *The Observer*.
[21] Op Cit. Gray, J. (2003).
[22] Gunaratna, R. (2002). *Inside Al Qaeda - Global Network of Terror*. London: Hurst and Company.
[23] Burke, J. (2003). *Al-Qaeda - Casting a Shadow of Terror*. London: I. B. Tauris.

revealed that Iran, Iraq and Syria were virtually absent suggesting that the political and theological differences in these countries served to constrain the influence of Al Qaeda. His work needs to be revisited to confirm its validity following the emergence of a jihadi insurgency in Iraq with alleged support from Syria and Iran.

Petter Nesser points out that Gunaratna, Burke, Hegghammer, Anonymous and Bergen have all provided limited conceptual models for Al Qaeda. ""*The new school" of al Qaeda analysts usually compares al-Qaeda with other more familiar research entities. In this way, al-Qaeda has been compared with a military alliance (NATO), business enterprise (al-Qaeda incorporated), an educational institute or university of radical Islam, and terrorism, etc"*[24] Nesser suggests that the major problem with these analogies is that they do not account for the evolving nature of Al Qaeda. Whether Al Qaeda's ideology has significantly evolved is debateable but less contentious is the claim that evolution has occurred in understanding the Al Qaeda phenomena. Gunaratna redeems himself in a more recent article in which he clearly articulates the role, but not necessarily the substance, of ideology in its aim "*to inspire and incite Islamist movements and the Muslim masses worldwide to attack those perceived to be the enemies of Islam.*"[25]

Theory, Conceptual Framework and Methodology

Theoretical Approach

Challenge of no 'Specific Method of Analysis'

While intellectual history may not have a "*specific method of analysis,*"[26] it ought not be free of all academic constraint. The normal rules of evidence and argument apply. A technique popular with analysts in this field is to consider binary opposites, for example, to compare traditional values with modernising influences. Problems arise when binary opposites are not mutually exclusive. Ideologues, for example, can be both elite intellectuals and yet influence popular culture. Nevertheless, this method is useful in locating particular elements of an ideology along a given spectrum of beliefs and so it will be used, where appropriate, as a distilling tool for analysis. Comparison of, for

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[24] Nesser, P. (2004). *Jihad in Europe - A Survey of the Motivations for Sunni Islamist Terrorism in Post-Millennium Europe.* Oslo: FFI.
[25] Gunaratna, R. (2005). Al Qaeda's Ideology. (H. Fradkin, H. Haqqani, & E. Brown, Eds.) *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology , 1*, 59-67.
[26] Op. Cit., Darnton, R. (1980).

example, Osama bin Laden's rhetoric and Menachen Begin's can serve to show similarities common to Middle Eastern leaders articulating their case for emancipation to the Western world while differences can illuminate aspects that may be unique to each intellectual or political tradition.

The 'Normative Approach' Pitfall

A potential danger of avoiding a scientific theoretical analysis is the adoption of a normative approach. Whilst most analysts take great care to consciously avoid subjective comments or assessment, they often make subconscious emotional judgements. The priority that politicians, media and academia attach to terrorism over other international issues is itself a reflection of subjective values. No matter how scrupulously an academic avoids judgemental assessments, the mere selection of terrorism as a topic puts the work in a highly subjective area. As Garnett says, "*It is impossible for a political scientist to free himself from the value system which underpins and shapes the way he thinks.*"[27] It would be disingenuous to hide the fact that this work is inspired by a desire to better understand an ideology that represents a perceived threat to the values of the author. As far as possible, however, a normative approach will be avoided.

Limitations of Conventional International Relations Theories

The words and writings of Al Qaeda have been available to experts for several years. Distilling the ideology from them is not a straightforward process. The reasons for this are many. The first of these may explain the reason why so little has been done to understand a philosophy, which has been specifically constructed to attack the West.

Western political analysts have developed conceptual or theoretical framework optimised for deconstructing predominantly Western political systems. These international relations theoretical frameworks include Structuralism, Constructivism, Pluralism and Realism. Of these, Realism is dominant. But Realism is unable to fully explain Middle East politics even at the state level;[28] it certainly cannot explain a non-state actor like Al Qaeda. Structuralism has similar limitations. Constructivism helps to

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[27]Garnett, J. C. (1984). *Commonsense and the Theory of International Politics.* Albany, , New York: State University of New York. p.85.

[28] Hinnebusch, R. (2003). *The International Politics of the Middle East.* Manchester: Manchester University Press. p.1.

explain at least a part of the region's peculiar relationship between "*identity and sovereignty, nation and state.*"[29] Pluralism seems to provide a more relevant perspective. It considers, amongst other things, the role of domestic politics and leadership worldview. Pluralism also has the advantage of taking account of certain aspects of apparently irrational behaviour.[30] But it too only provides part of the picture because Pluralism essentially fills in the gaps between theory and reality for a Westphalian realist model of international relations. As such, it has, like the other Schools of thought mentioned, limited applicability to understanding the ideology of a non-state and allegedly non-rational[31] actor operating on a global scale. The absence of a suitable behavioural model presents a difficulty in understanding Al Qaeda. Consequently, the international system (Western at least) tended to concentrate analysis on Al Qaeda's physical components rather than its ideological features.

The Exotic nature of 'Religion', 'Fundamentalism' and 'Terrorism'

The "religious", "Islamic", "fundamentalist" and "terrorist" labelling of Al Qaeda have further blurred the choices for a theoretical framework. Secular Western liberal democratic thinkers have tended to view the role of religion with indifference at best and with disdain at worst. Although Juergensmeyer and others have attempted to explain the relevance of religion in contemporary politics, Western popular (and political) culture still sees religion as a cause of violence and suffering against which secular political systems provide an effective buffer.[32]   Similar subjective interpretations affect the Western perception of Islam. Islam is seen as socially regressive and politically aggressive. For many the word Islam is increasingly inseparable from fundamentalism and terrorism. The terrorism label carries its own mantra, often repeated by politicians, of "*no negotiations with terrorists*" and "*no surrender to terrorism*". From a Western perspective, these labels collectively depict an alien mindset that, because of its irrationality cannot be understood and because of its politics need not be engaged. After all, what is the point in understanding the "other" if there is to be no dialogue? The perception, until recently, that religion, fundamentalisms

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[29] Ibid. p.2.
[30] Ibid. p.12-13.
[31] It is debatable whether Al Qaeda qualifies as a non-rational actor. For the purposes of this study it is assumed that it does not fit the conventional definition of a rational actor on the international stage. Although, as will be seen when considering the political style of its rhetoric, Al Qaeda displays elements of realist and republican political styles.
[32] Juergensmeyer, M. (2000), *Terror in the Mind of God*. London: University of California Press

and terrorism were exotic aspects of international relations created a reluctance by academics to seriously explore the ideology of such political movements in all but a few exceptions.

Terrorism Research Gap

Despite an 'explosion of academic interest' in terrorism, Ranstorp notes that there has not been a structured review of the field of study, including of gaps.[33] The field has concentrated on terrorist from a political, methodological and psychological context. Terrorist ideology is has not been addressed as a topic in its own right. Although the heading 'ideology' increasingly appears in terrorism literature, it mostly precedes a largely unsupported list of a group's beliefs, objectives and even strategy. Not a single piece of work in the field discusses a framework or methodology for analysing ideology. The related field of terrorist narratives and counter narratives has seen an increasing interest but the methodology used is essentially that of discourse analysis.[34] Further, the narrative labelling betrays an emphasis on what the message is rather than on how the message is delivered and how it impacts on audiences. The narratives are assessed largely as arguments rather than stories containing mythical truths and so the extent of their emotional and cultural appeal is not fully appreciated. The holistic frameworks available since ancient times and developed by modern academics for the study of rhetoric have not been applied in terrorism research. Collectively this neglect of ideology, particularly through its subcomponents of myth and rhetoric, represent a research gap which this Thesis aims to fill.

Ideology – Crisis, Myth and Rhetoric

Ideology is understood in many ways. Academically, it could be described as a <u>particular</u> worldview but socially it is often understood as a <u>peculiar</u> worldview. Ideology is commonly seen as the abnormal construction of the other. The complexity and variety underlying the concept of ideology deserves an in-depth assessment before it can be applied to a particular political movement such as Al Qaeda and so a chapter within this thesis explores the concept and deduces relevant methodological frameworks. In the meantime, the theoretical assumptions are that ideology arises out of social and political

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[33] Ranstorp, M. (Ed.). (2007). *Mapping Terrorism Research.* Abingdon: Routledge. p.6.
[34] See for example, de Graaf, B. A. (2010). How to Counter Radical Narratives. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism ,* *33* (5), 408-428

crises. These crises, force a change of worldview. Societies' worldview comprises a collection of contested truths about their origin, purpose and destiny known academically as myths. The nature of these myths, how they are created and how they change is critical to understanding a worldview or ideology. As ideology is mostly a construction of men, ideologues arise in the crisis environment to articulate an interpretation of the crises, provide a convincing solution and to chart a way towards societal deliverance. These ideologues need, above all, to inspire their followers to believe in their construction of truth about the world sufficiently strongly to make all necessary sacrifices to preserve or perpetuate their ideology. Rhetoric[35] is the primary medium through which these steps in the process of ideological construction, articulation, assimilation and growth are achieved.

Ideology can therefore be seen as a process beginning with a crisis, the resulting construction of myth and the articulation of both the crisis and its solution through rhetoric. The intellectual and historical environment in which the crisis is situated drives the type of mythical construction that shapes the new ideology and the type of rhetoric deployed to articulate it. Both the type of myth and rhetorical style shape the stylistic characteristics of ideology. For example, the extent to which an ideology reflects realist, republican, bureaucratic and revolutionary types of politics are a feature of its rhetorical style as depicted in its textuality. Rhetoric therefore both shapes the ideology it articulates and is shaped by it. Furthermore, it is through rhetoric that an ideology achieves form, spreads and makes an impact. A study of ideology cannot be conducted without a study of associated rhetoric.

Rhetoric

An ideology is no more than an idea if it is not communicated with sufficient impact to change a people's worldview and behaviour to the extent necessary to establish that ideology amongst them. Communicating with impact, or persuasion, is the primary role of rhetoric. The burden of effective communication is greater for Al Qaeda than perhaps any other political movement. It is communicating to a global, multi-lingual, multi-racial and multi-national audience. It has to inspire and inform its followers; it has to seduce and motivate prospective converts to its cause and it has to compel its adversaries into

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[35] The word rhetoric is a derivation from the Greek rhetorikos meaning oratorical.

accepting its will. It must do all this with its leaders in hiding and risking detection every time they communicate with the outside world.

The Internet and global media alleviate these challenges to a large extent. Unlike other global ideologies such as Communism, Al Qaeda has relied less on books and face-to-face debate and more on the Internet, a medium that allows it rapid global reach with minimal costs. The Internet is also a medium to which the vast majority of its target audience of young impressionable Muslims is connected. Consequently, whenever Al Qaeda speaks, it connects directly to its target audience. Every time it does so, it attempts to drive a wedge between ordinary Muslims and the current Muslim leadership. Nevertheless, it is not so much the power of the medium but the persuasive power of the messages that are most critical in establishing Al Qaeda's ideology and so understanding the messages within its rhetoric, is the key to understanding its ideology.

Rhetoric has numerous definitions, reflecting the multiplicity of meanings that theoreticians and society have attached to it. According to Richards, rhetoric is the "*study of verbal understanding and misunderstanding.*"[36] In the context of fiction, Wayne C. Booth sees the word as "*the author's means of controlling his readers.*"[37] Perhaps George Kennedy provides the most comprehensive definition:"*the energy inherent in emotion and thought, transmitted through a system of signs, including language, to others to influence their decisions or actions.*"[38] Although some theorists have used these and other definitions to expand the meaning of rhetoric to include aspects such as clarity and understanding, these are fundamentally a means of influence and so persuasion remains the essential purpose of rhetoric. Within this function of ideology, argumentation plays a special part and so it is worth considering how Al Qaeda's arguments sit within related theoretical frameworks such Toulmin's theories of argument.[39] Al Qaeda's rhetoric consequently becomes the primary material for ideological analysis.

Conceptual Framework

A common view amongst commentators is that Al-Qaeda's ideology is an extreme manifestation of a current trend of Islamic revivalism or fundamentalism. What are the

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[36] Quoted in: Dixon, P. (1971).   *Rhetoric.* London: Methuen & Co Ltd. p.3.
[37] Quoted in Booth, W.C. (1961). *The Rhetoric of Fiction.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press
[38] Quoted in: Herrick, J. A. (2005). *The History and Theory of Rhetoric.* Boston MA : Pearson Education Inc. p.5.
[39] See for example, Toulmin, S. (1958). *The Uses of Arguments.* London: University Press Cambridge.

ideological features of this fundamentalism and how do they compare with Al Qaeda's ideology? This question provides a useful starting point for an analytical methodology. Whilst much has been done in recent years to investigate Islamic fundamentalism, it has mostly been approached in a thematic or piecemeal fashion. Insight into fundamentalism is provided from singular aspects such as history, theology or politics. Vatikiotis[40] is a case in point. He admits to seeing Islam as primarily a political entity and so his analysis of fundamentalism lacks a sufficiently broad theological and social perspective. Wedeen aptly encapsulates the dangers of this approach, which extends from some academics to Western politicians and Islamist extremists:

> *"Reifying "Islam" not only denies the empirical world of plurality and diversity, it also proves politically dangerous by making "Islam" into an object rather than a set of polyvalent activities whose practitioners have divergent visions, fantasies, understandings and interests."[41]*

Alternatively, the study of fundamentalism is approached as a series of essays on, for example, manifestation of fundamentalism in a particular country or group. Wise researchers recognize the limitations of this approach. Sidahmed and Ehteshami acknowledge the following in their extensive attempt to answer questions on fundamentalism "... *we neither provide conclusive answers to these questions nor attempt an exhaustive treatment of them*."[42] As the aim of this study is to understand the roots and nature of Al-Qaeda's ideology, it is necessary to understand as many of the factors that shape it as possible. Consequently, the analysis framework must be comprehensive and multidisciplinary. It should also be able to explain the mechanisms for evolution of thought that shape the ideology under study.

Adapting Dekmejian's Theoretical Framework

Dekmejian is one of the few researchers to attempt a fuller picture of the ideological components of Islamism. He based his study largely on empirical evidence of political Islamist movements, both contemporary and historical. From this he deduced that 'political Islam' in a revolutionary and resurgent form is borne of crisis. He further identifies six types of crises that initiate resurgence or revolution. These are: identity

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[40] Vatikiotis, P. J. (1991). *Islam and the State.* London: Routledge. p.7.
[41] Wedeen, L. (2003). Beyond the crusades: Why Huntington and bin Ladin are Wrong. *Middle East Policy, 10* (2). p.54.
[42] Sidahmed, A. S., & Ehteshami, A. (Eds.). (1996). *Islamic Fundamentalism.* Oxford: Westview Press. p.1.

crisis, legitimacy crisis, elite misrule, class conflict, military impotency and crisis of culture (particularly the impact of modernity).[43]

Dekmejian considers the resulting fundamentalist movements in terms of their organisation, goals, leadership and ideology. He also explores the interaction between these movements and their target audiences as well as their behaviour in response to the state. The fundamentalist personality that comprises these movements is described as *"acutely alienated individual(s)"* who *"tend to be aggressive in their dealings with unbelievers (kuffar) and often with mainstream Muslims."*[44] Beyond this, he does not address the issue of terrorism or deal with the theology underpinning the justification for aggression and violence against others. Dekmejian's work provides a crisp systemic model of radical Islamist movements without exposing the delicate and complex nature of the similarities these movements have with mainstream Islam and with Western political ideologies. His primary conclusion that radical Islam has a cyclical propensity to rejuvenate itself at times of crisis,[45] tends to imply a peculiarly Islamic phenomenon: he does not test this conclusion by analysing how other religions respond to crises. This absence of comparison leads to a loss of perspective. Dekmejian's conceptual framework, therefore, lacks sufficient comparative analysis to identify distinctive features of Al Qaeda's ideology. Another limitation is that the evolutionary mechanisms for fundamentalist doctrine are not fully exposed. Particularly, he does not identify in detail how a particular social or political crisis leads to a reinterpretation of reality or the construction and adaptation of political myths.

Nevertheless, Dekmejian's theoretical framework provides an effective theoretical link between political and social crises and extremist ideologies as well as providing a list of possible sources of crises that lead to the development of extremist thinking. With some adaption for a study focusing on ideology, Dekmejian's framework becomes suitable for determining Al Qaeda's ideology. The concept of ideology must first be explored, particularly its links with history, religion and myth. The impact of history on religion and myth construction in a crisis environment needs then to be determined to expose the components of belief that contribute to the ideology. How that ideology is

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[43] Ibid. p.8.
[44] Ibid. p.33.
[45] Ibid. p.8.

constructed through rhetoric and what the nature of rhetoric reveals about the ideology, its major ideologue, bin Laden, and Al Qaeda's political style can then be exposed.

Thesis Structure

Chapter One: Ideology and Myth.

The questions of what is ideology, how it arises, what are its primary features and how it exploits related ideas such as political myth are explored in this Chapter through a discussion of the primary theories and ideas relevant to the Thesis. Initially, definitions of ideology are discussed followed by an overview of the contribution of Marx, Postmodernists and the 'end of ideology' debate. Links with knowledge, history and language are explored, as these themes are exploited in other parts of the Thesis. The functions and features of ideology: its stages of development, rivalry and sectarianism in ideology, as well as the impact of social conditions, are debated before looking at the links to strategy, religion, violence, stages of development and modern terrorism. The concept of myth is explored in relation to ideology. This is done via the bridge between ideology and myth: the rhetoric of contingent issues, and the role of myth as a solution to such issues. Wider aspects of rhetoric are explored later but theories and characteristics of myth and its relationship with ideology are debated here.

Chapter Two: History, Crises and Myth.

The theoretical ideas developed are then applied to the influence of significant historical factors, associated crises and myths in Muslims societies in general and on Al Qaeda's ideology in particular. The Chapter discusses the conceptions of history that shape the worldview of Arabs and Muslims and compares them with Western perspectives. How history, theology and the myths of failure and success are linked is explored, as are the reasons for the myth of Western 'double standards.' The Chapter identifies the creation of a cultural divide through the way history is perceived and communicated in the Muslim world. How these factors contribute to Al Qaeda's 'imagined past' is addressed so that Al Qaeda's interpretation of the present and its aspirations for the future can be understood. The influence of the 'Golden Age' is considered as well as the factors that influenced the spread of Islam to show the roots of the subsequent construction of the myths of jihad, *hijra* (exile) and Divinely ordained victory. The development of these myths into the myths of an eternal conflict and the myth of creative violence is then

described.   An important factor in this development was the way Arabs and Muslims view the Crusades. The impact this view has on the wording and substance of Al Qaeda's ideology receives particular attention. The influence of Orientalism and Occidentalism in shaping political and religious outlook in the Muslim world are discussed to establish the genesis of Al Qaeda's beliefs about the future and its vision of an alternative political system. The themes exposed in this Chapter are developed in subsequent chapters.

Chapter Three: Crisis Environment and Myth

The role of political and social crises in creating religious extremism through the medium of myth is explored in this Chapter. An underlying explanatory cause for Dekmejian's hypothesis, linking social and political crises to religious extremism, is offered in terms of human dignity, indignation and humiliation and how mythical reinterpretations lead to extreme ideology. The hypothesis is tested through studies of extremism in a Christian and Hindu tradition before considering how extremism arose in contemporary Islam through a series of crises experienced by the Muslims world. How some of Al Qaeda's ideological myths developed under these crises is identified.

Chapter Four: Rhetoric, Debate, Types and Characteristics and Nature.

A debate on rhetoric involving the advantages and disadvantages of the art, comparative rhetoric, its current resurgence and development precedes a discussion of how rhetoric applies to Al Qaeda's ideology. The types and characteristics of rhetoric are mapped onto Al Qaeda's statements to determine what that reveals about its ideology. A similar mapping technique is applied to the nature of rhetoric, its social acceptance and rejection. The purpose of discussing the art of rhetoric is to situate Al Qaeda's dialogue within this area of academic study as well as to expose methodologies such as the use of metaphor and implicit meanings in deriving detailed elements of Al Qaeda's ideology in other chapters. The identity and character of the orator to the effectiveness of rhetoric makes it difficult to attribute a rhetorical style to an organisation or to a movement. It is therefore necessary to concentrate on Al Qaeda's primary ideologues.

Chapter Five: Rhetoric – Symbolism, Argumentation, Audience and Debate

This Chapter continues the methodology of the last chapter by employing features of rhetoric to analyse Al Qaeda's ideology. It begins with an assessment of symbolism,

where actions become speech acts, and explores Al Qaeda's use of symbolism as reflective rhetoric. Toulmin's theories of argumentation are discussed to determine the extent to which Al Qaeda's persuasion strategy is susceptible to his ideas. A significant letter from the Movement to the West is then assessed to reveal aspects of its narrative dialogue and to demonstrate the utility of an 'unstructured' approach to argument analysis. Al Qaeda's understanding of its audience and the adaptation of its message and style are probed to demonstrate inter alia its strengths and weaknesses in addressing a range of audiences. Finally, Al Qaeda's recognition of a 'battle of ideas' is evaluated to expose its debating style and the vulnerabilities it recognises in its own rhetoric.

Chapter Six: Rhetoric, Textuality and Political Style

This chapter seeks to determine Al Qaeda's political style by employing Hariman's theory of a link between textual rhetoric and political style. It begins by exploring his ideas about textuality and rhetoric of the Courtly and the Bureaucratic styles to determine the extent to which Al Qaeda exhibits these features in its ideology and conduct. Elements of the Republicans and the Realist styles within Al Qaeda's ideology are then exposed. Hariman's Theories, or at least his models, are Western state-centric and so these limitations are briefly discussed before exploring a relevant alternative, the political style of modern terrorism. The textuality and political style of this modern terrorism genre is distilled from Karl Heinzen's 'Murder and Liberty' to determine particularly its link to realism and Al Qaeda and how textuality is exploited to incite killing. Finally, differences between realism and revolutionary ideology are addressed by considering the crisis environment and narratives of Holy Violence.

Chapter Seven: Oratory, Poetry and Osama bin Laden

Charismatic personality is critical to the propagation of a radical or revolutionary ideology. Often more than one individual acts as an ideologue or visionary leader in developing and articulating ideology over time. At any moment, there is usually one individual who stands out as the ideologue *par excellence*. Osama bin Laden was the undisputed founder and leader of Al Qaeda. His rhetorical ability determined how the ideology was framed, communicated and how it incited action. Bin laden's oratory is evaluated through both his personal qualities and by various influences on him. The use of both rational argument and symbolism by Bin Laden is explored.

Poetry is a highly effective vehicle for symbolic language and for communicating myths. It has a particular intellectual tradition in the Muslim world but there are also a few cases of poetry used to incite violence by Western orators. Bin Laden's poetry is therefore examined to discover what it reveals about Al Qaeda's ideology. As this Thesis deals with Al Qaeda's creation and exploitation of myth, it is useful to make a comparison of bin Laden's deployment of myths with a religiously inspired leader from another tradition who also indulged in terrorism in a Middle East environment. The final section is therefore a comparative analysis of the rhetoric and myth of Manachem Begin and Osama bin Laden which illuminate pertinent differences between the historical experience and unity of the peoples the two men's rhetoric seeks to represent.

Summary of Research Objectives

Al Qaeda is in many ways a unique phenomenon. As the first truly global movement undertaking spectacular and simultaneous attacks in different parts of the world, including on the world's primary superpower, it has shattered paradigms in the utility and methodology of political violence. That violence is increasingly inspired through rhetorical incitement rather than being centrally planned and executed. Al Qaeda's challenge to the world order has been unprecedented, as has the international community's response to it; of what is effectively a world war on Al Qaeda inspired terrorism.

For these reasons, amongst others, most previous theoretical models of analysis are inadequate to fully understand Al Qaeda's ideology. Its protean nature, its diverse impact and its defuse organisational structure demands the eclectic mix of analytical approaches employed in this study. This study specifically sets out to produce a suitable model of ideology, particularly claims to contested truths that comprise its main components, referred to here as political myths. It applies this model to and tests the theory that extremist ideas, or political myths, evolve in religious context during conditions of political and social crises. Finally, the study will consider how Al Qaeda's ideology is articulated in the light of classical and contemporary understandings of rhetoric. How rhetoric shapes behaviour, how it is used in Al Qaeda's argumentation and what it reveals about Al Qaeda's political style, are also addressed.

Chapter One: Ideology and Political Myth

Ideology and myth have been understood in a variety of ways, both historically and conceptually. As this Thesis analyses a particular ideology as expressed through political myth, it is crucial to explore the meanings, functions and utility of both concepts. The breadth of the subject is such that it is only possible to identify some prominent theories and ideas relevant to this study and to gain a general understanding of the debate surrounding these issues.

Definitions of ideology are initially addressed followed by an overview of the contribution of Marx, Postmodernists and the 'end of ideology' debate. Ideology's links with knowledge, history and language are explored so that themes can be exploited in other parts of the Thesis. The functions and features of ideology: its stages of development, rivalry and sectarianism, as well as the impact of social conditions, are debated before looking at the links to strategy, religion, violence, stages of development and modern terrorism. The concept of myth is explored in relation to ideology. This is done via the bridge between ideology and myth, the rhetoric of contingent issues, and the role of myth as a solution to such issues. Finally, theories of myth, its characteristics and its relationship with ideology are debated.

Ideology – Definitions and Debate

There are many definitions of ideology reflecting a diverse range of understandings of what constitutes ideology and its perceived purposes. According to Freeden, "*The study of ideology is torn between various approaches that have emerged out of different conceptualizations of ideology, causing disarray and confusion amongst scholars.*"[46] Rather than list various definitions, it would be more instructive to identify the different conceptions of ideology. One of the earliest is ideology as a 'science of ideas,' conceived by 18th centaury French intellectuals. They attempted to develop an entirely new social and economic order based on science. Their failures disappointed a once supportive Napoleon who derided ideologists as men of abstraction rather than action; Napoleon was first of many to give ideology a negative connotation.

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[46] Freeden, M. (1996). *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach*. Oxford.

Marx originated another negative view of ideology as 'false consciousness,' which is discussed later. Political Marxists such as Lenin conceived of ideology in a slightly less negative way as 'class worldview.' Mannheim saw ideology as 'sociology of knowledge', which is either 'distortion' of reality as understood by Napoleon and Marx or a group's worldview, similar to a class worldview. The prevalence of totalitarian ideologies in the mid-twentieth century caused Hannah Arndt, Daniel Bell and others to conceive of ideology as 'action-orientated irrational idealization'. They saw ideologies as a system comprising distorted, highly selective and unscientific social ideas. Many from this school of thought also postulated the 'end of ideology' view, discussed later.

Plamenatz advances a neutral and politically useful description of ideology as a 'system of ideas, beliefs and values' when he describes it as a "*set of close to related beliefs or ideas, or even attitudes characteristic of a group or community*."[47] According to this description, every social group could have an ideology but the label ideology has tended to be used mostly in a political context. It is difficult to separate those thoughts and ideas within a community that are ideological from those that are not. Nevertheless, in general usage the term is employed in a limited sense to identify ideas and beliefs that determine a people's political view of themselves and the world as opposed to those ideas and beliefs that could be described as social ritualistic or purely scientific. An understanding of the concepts of ideology, explored in this Chapter is more useful than a precise definition. In the meantime, the following definition adequately describes the way the term will be used in the Thesis:

> "*An ideology is the beliefs, values, principles, and objectives - however ill-defined or tenuous - by which a group defines its distinctive political identity and aims.*"[48]

Marx and Ideology

Ideology appears to be a post-Enlightenment analytical tool for defining and understanding various social and political outlooks. Whereas Hegel tended to use the concept primarily as a philosophical notion, Marx subsequently applied it to his ideas of social politics. Furthermore, his analysis was intrinsically linked to his normative political and economic theories. Marx identified more clearly than any other modern philosopher, the links between social structure, economics and politics. Largely as a

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[47] Plamenatz, J. (1971). *Ideology*. London: Macmillan. p.15.
[48] Rosenbaum, W. (1975). *Political Culture* . London: Nelson. p. 120.

result of his theories, sociology emerged as a modern science. It was natural therefore that the study of sociology would be dominated by Marxist philosophical influence and so the conception of ideology became linked to sociology and the two were linked to socialist political theory.[49]

Marx was most responsible for introducing the term ideology into social and political theory. He often referred to it as "*false consciousness*" by which he "*appears to have meant a set of mistaken beliefs about matters important to them shared by a whole group of persons or even a whole community.*"[50] Both Marx and Engels avoided referring to their theory of communism as ideology even though by the general understanding of the term it was. As Plamenatz explains it was "*presumably because they did not think of it as a form of false consciousness.*" In the general sense, it appears that ideology is something that the 'other' has. But it seems that the 'other' must be reasonably sophisticated to possess it as the term is rarely used to discuss the ideas and beliefs of primitive communities.

Marx and Engels' prejudicial view of ideology arose out of their belief that it was an instrument of class conflict. They saw ideology as a construction of the ruling classes to exercise control and domination over the proletariat. Ideology was used to create the "*myth of a unified political community, through illusory laws, cultural direction, and 'verbal masquerading' – that is, the power over language.*"[51] These techniques were used to present "*truth-claims that possessed universal, rational validity*" so that the subservient class believed that the ideology constructed by the ruling class was in fact their own ideology.[52] They were consequently convinced that they were serving their own interest by working hard in difficult conditions, while in reality they were serving the interests of the capitalist. If religion was the opium of the masses for Marx then ideology could have been the morphine, a derivative specifically engineered to achieve particular social and political effects.

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[49] For example, an early 1970s work 'Ideology in Social Science', contains a collection of essays on the subject by 14 authors, almost all of whom were members of Marxist organisations. The work critically salutes Marx's philosophy and proposes Marxist ideas as alternatives to contemporary western thinking. See Blacburn, R. (1972). *Ideology in Social Science.* Bungay: Fontana.
[50] Op. Cit., Plamenatz, J. (1971). p.23-24.
[51] Freeden, M. (2003). *Ideology, A very Short Introduction.* New York : Oxford University Press.p6.
[52] Ibid.

These Marxist class-war conclusions may be contestable but the idea that an ideology is not merely a passive system but can be actively used to control beliefs and behaviour is difficult to fault. Equally valid may be the claim that ideology employs myth, laws, culture and language to advance universal truths and the idea of a unified community. Al Qaeda's employment of myth and language (rhetoric) as instruments of ideology and its objectives of establishing truth-claims and a unified community are explored later in this Thesis.

Postmodernists, September 11 and the 'End of Ideology'

Just as Marx presented ideology as a tool for domination of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie, Friedrich Nietzsche postulated that concepts of good and bad or truth and falsehood were also created as tools for social and political domination, of one group by another. These binary opposites, he claimed, were originally created by the Greeks and absorbed into the Judeo Christian religions for a similar purpose of control:

> *"The dichotomy is absolute and exclusive for a simple reason: it began as the aristocrat's view of society and reflects their idea of the gulf between themselves and the 'other'."[53]*

Nietzsche highly influenced the scepticism that characterizes postmodernism. Postmodernists find it problematic to deal with binary opposites because one pole defines the other and because an issue rarely sits exclusively on one of the poles. Issues could be a mixture of, for example, the two concepts of good and evil, both of which are constructs of ideologues and neither of which appeals to a postmodernist. David Hawkes asserts that this is why postmodernists are unwilling to *"speak of 'ideology', since this category implies a binary opposition between true and false modes of thought."*[54] Consequently, postmodernists such as Baudrillard analyze Al Qaeda's actions after 11 September as follows:

> *"We have gone well beyond ideology and politics. The energy that nourishes terror, no ideology, no cause, not even an Islamic one, can explain."[55]*

Baudrillard's denial of the role of ideology in these attacks and his claim that they possibly heralded the 'end of ideology', begs the question; if not ideology then what?

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[53] Nietzshe, F. (1887 (1969)). *On the Genealogy of Morals.* (W. Kaufman, & R. J. Hollingdale, Trans.) New York: Vintage Books. Quoted in: Hawkes, D. (2003). *Ideology.* London: Routledge. P149.
[54] Op. Cit., Hawkes, D. (2003). p.189.
[55] Baudrillard, Jean. Quoted in Ibid p.191.

Hawkes partly answers the question when he suggests that ideology was probably once an external struggle between classes, it is now an internal struggle for the individual.[56] That is to say, ideology has evolved from targeting the collective to targeting the individual. This theoretical claim appears to have practical validity in ideologies that encourage individual activism such as those that employ terrorism and may be a product of modernity's empowerment of the individual.

Although, the 'end of ideology' thesis has been around since the mid-twentieth century, it is significant that postmodernists found it difficult to recognize an ideological dimension to the events of September 11. Terrorism, more than any other form of political violence, challenges notions of good and evil or truth and falsehood. Any theoretical framework that attempts to ignore the discourse around these binary opposites is likely to blind itself to the existence of an ideology that inspired these actions and consequently be unable to identify the elements within that ideology which could provide the 'explanation' that eluded Braudrillard.

It is important to note that among the many intellectual descendents of Nietzsche are those like Foucault who would not share Braudrillard's view. Foucault was critical and dismissive of ideology but he argued that all regimes of power are implicated by regimes of knowledge. In other words they necessarily have an ideological component. The purpose here is not to explore the full spectrum of Nietzsche's influence or of postmodernist concepts of ideology, rather it is to critically examine the 'end of ideology' debate and establish this Thesis' position on it. Therefore, the understanding of ideology adopted by this study accepts the view that the focus of ideology has shifted from the collective to the individual but rejects the view that Al Qaeda's terrorism cannot be explained through ideology.

Terrorism has been a form of political violence employed throughout history by state and non-state actors. For example, the Romans employed it as a state[57] and the Zealot Sicarii used it as non-state actors.[58] Winston Churchill admitted to employing terrorism

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[56] Op. Cit., Hawkes, D. (2003). p.192.
[57] For example the crucifixion of 6,000 followers of Spartacus as part of a victory celebration along the Appian Way in 71 BC. Bella Civilia 1.120.
[58] Rapoport, D. C. (1984). Fear and Trembling: Terrorism in Three Religious Traditions. *American Political Science Review*, *Vol. 78* (3), pp. 658-677.

during WWII, albeit his admission was only made in secret.[59]   All of these regimes and groups had clearly articulated views of themselves, the world around them and their reasons for using violence in the way they did. They consequently had an ideology. Why Braudrillard finds no ideological explanation for *"The energy that nourishes terror"* is possibly because he and his ilk have too narrowly defined ideology and have difficulty confronting the claims to truth and falsehood or good and evil that inevitably accompany acts of terrorism. If Al Qaeda's terrorism has created a paradigm shift then it is by enabling a few individuals to project terror violence with an 'energy' that was hitherto only possible for state actors. Its actions were preceded and succeeded by detailed statements of why Al Qaeda had chosen to act. Its actions were therefore ideological.

Characteristics of Ideology

Ideology, Knowledge and History

Ideology is an epistemological issue - it relates to how knowledge and beliefs are thought to be acquired. Both Hegel and Kant saw knowledge as "*a product of human intercourse and of history.*"[60]   Indeed "*At the centre of Hegel's philosophy [is] the conception of history as a process whereby mankind are educated by their own endeavours, so that the potential in man is made actual.*"[61] In other words, ideology is the product of philosophical discourse shaped by the reality of human experience. It is in many ways a product of a particular intellectual history. This intellectual history, or the discussion of ideas, cannot occur without language. Ideology is therefore a product of intellectual history as communicated by a particular linguistic or rhetorical style.

Games, Patterns and Threads – Wittgenstein Applied to Ideology

Some of Wittgenstein's philosophical ideas have been absorbed into the study of ideology. Wittgenstein identified what he called 'family resemblances' in arguments or ideas. Analysts of ideology have adopted that concept to propose that ideologies can be grouped into families containing similar but not identical features. For example, all

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[59] Churchill, W. (1945 28-March). General Ismay For C.O.S Committee. *Top Secret Memo*. Whitehall, London, UK: National Archieves Reference D83/5.*"It seems to me that the moment has come when the question of bombing of German cities simply for the sake of increasing the terror, though under other pretexts, should be reviewed."*

[60] Op. Cit., Plamenatz, J. (1971).p.36.

[61] Ibid.p.38.

liberal ideologies are linked by their commitment to individuality but they differ on the degree to which individual freedoms can be restricted by states in the interest of the collective good. Similarly, Islamist groups are linked by their belief in the concept of *Al-hakimiya*[62], (sovereignty belongs to God) but they differ in their beliefs on how to establish that sovereignty on earth. Most Islamist movements have declared violence as no longer relevant to the process of establishing an Islamist state but ideological off shoots such as Al Qaeda believe that violence is both ideologically and practically necessary. Therefore, ideologies can be grouped by identifying common patterns or concepts within them e.g totalitarian tendencies, expansionist ambitions, revolutionary movements etc.

The situation is complicated by the tendency in ideologies that define themselves as mutually exclusive expropriating concepts from each other. For example, Maududi established Islamism as an alternative to Western Liberalism and Marxism. However his ideology adopted many Marxist concepts both consciously and unconsciously. Speaking about the Qu'ran, he wrote: *"It is not a book discussing theology ... it is a book of agitation and movement (Kitab da'wa wa harakah; da'wa being, more or less, the Islamic equivalent of the Marxist Agitprop)."*[63] By equating the Qur'an to Marxist political propaganda, Maududi establishes equivalence between his Islamism and revolutionary Marxism. He also plays a critical word game: he redefines the word *da'wa* from the commonly held passive sense of invitation or proselytizing to the more active voice of propaganda or agitation, necessary for a revolutionary ideology.

Freeden applies Wittgenstein's analogy of a thread comprising spun fibres to suggest that apparent continuity of thought in an ideology is in fact a series of short-term discontinuities that are only apparent upon close examination.[64] Wittgenstein seemed to apply the thread analogy in the social context of individuals and communities and so it is debatable whether Freeden is correctly interpreting Wittgenstein.[65] Nevertheless, Freeden's conclusion that ideology comprises a series of discontinuous ideas seems to

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[62] Maududi introduced the term Al-hakimiya (a derivative of an Arabic word that means "to govern") in his work Al-Mustalahat al-Arba'a fi'l-Quran and it has since been used by Islamists as their concept of sovereignty.

[63] Al-mabadi al-asasiyyah li-fahm al-Quran (Kuwait: 1971), p. 53 Quoted in Lerman, E. (1981). Mawdudi's Concept of Islam . *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 17, 498-499.

[64] Op. Cit., Freeden, M. (2003). p.44.

[65] See for example, Chantal, B. (2008, Winter). *The Fibre, the Thread, and the Weaving of Life: Wittgenstein and Nancy on Community*. 103-117. p.114.

hold good. For example, Nazi ideology comprised a number of strands of thought of which racial supremacy was one prominent feature. The belief in racial supremacy, in turn, comprised the idea of an Aryan race, Darwinian concepts of the survival of the fittest, the notion of the Third Reich, nationalism and so on.

Another feature of the thread analogy is that the ideological mix or thread varies with time and so history affects how each component idea influences the overall ideology. The Nazi party initially equated itself to communism. Hitler once said, "*Basically National Socialism and Marxism are the same*,"[66] but the Nazis gradually accepted class stratification based on merit and eventually even despised the term socialism altogether. All ideologies appear to be a thread of political thought made up of a number of sub-ideologies and concepts and the weave of these components evolves with time.

Language and Ideology

Developments in the philosophy of language by Wittgenstein and others have led to a deeper understanding of the internal complexity and communication of ideology. As grammar rules work mostly at the unconscious level, discourse has the potential to communicate meanings that are unknowingly held by adherents of an ideological view. This feature calls into question the degree to which an ideology can be regarded as rational. If the adherents are unaware of all their political beliefs, can they exercise rational control over them? Moreover, by subtle changes in words and phrases, it is possible to carry a number of different meanings.

Wittgenstein's analogy of the rules of language to the rules of games, with their permissions and constraints, is observable in the communication and adoption of ideological concepts. Freeden illustrates the idea using the example of the anti-Semitic component of Nazi ideology, arguing that it could only be acceptable:

> "....*if I accepted that the word 'Aryan' was a desirable, and the word 'Jew' was an undesirable, term for the features of a group. Moreover, the rules of that language game pitted Aryan against Jew as opposites. By further classifying Jews as 'subhuman', their elimination could not, by definition, be a crime against humanity.*"[67]

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[66] The Bulletin of International News. *Royal Institute of International Affairs , vol XVIII* (no. 5), 269. Cited in Hayek, F. A. (1971). *The Road to Serfdom.* Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. p.22n.
[67] Op. Cit., Freeden, M. (2003).

The elaborate link between language and ideology has been expanded by Paul Ricoeur's concept of 'surplus meaning' where a phrase intended to have one meaning takes on an additional meaning when interpreted in a different time or culture. This multiplicity of reading of ideological text, invariably by consumers of ideology, has led to the development of 'reception' theory. Producers of ideology are often aware of these features and may deliberately choose phrases that may be interpreted differently by different groups. As one of the functions of ideology is as weapon in a conflict of ideas, mobilised as propaganda, determining the definition of words is an important tactic: "*The actor who succeeds in defining the context of meaning gains an advantage over his adversaries.*"[68] Language games and the use of language to articulate and spread ideology is so significant that it is addressed at length in the chapters of this Thesis dealing with Rhetoric. Collectively these features make analysis of ideological discourse a multifaceted and complex task, inseparable from historical and rhetorical analysis.

Functions of Ideology

The multiplicity of definitions and conceptual difference in ideology results in an almost equally diverse number of ideological functions. Writers have tended to identify one or two functions of ideology, depending upon the particular context in which they view ideology but, in a general sense, ideology has many functions and these are often simultaneously deployed. All the beliefs and theories that constitute an ideology are descriptive and persuasive. They "*serve to describe and to explain and they serve also to justify and encourage behaviour or to condemn and discourage it, or to express hopes and other feelings, or to allay fears.*"[69] The functions considered central to the Thesis are briefly debated below.

Integration and Defence

Mosca identified the primary function of ideology (he called it political formula) as being to integrate and defend groups. He postulated that in:

> "*societies that have attained a certain level of civilisation, ruling classes do not justify their power exclusively by de facto possession of it, but try to find a moral and legal basis for it, representing it as*

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[68] Grundy, K., M, & Weinstein, K. G. (1974). *The Ideologies of Violence*. Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company. p.7.
[69] Op. Cit., Plamenatz, J. (1971). p.70.

> *a logical and necessary consequence of doctrines and beliefs that are generally recognized and accepted."[70]*

While Mosca's comment refers specifically to the justification of power by existing regimes, the idea has broader application. Both revolutionary and conservative ideologues need to define and defend the identity of their groups in order to strengthen cohesion against external attack and to increase the motivation of members to propagate the ideology. They do this by defining who the group is, what it stands for and, often more importantly, what it stands against as well as how it intends to achieve its objectives. This aspect of ideology further serves to attract new members and sympathisers. An important aspect of integration and defending the group, according to Mosca, is to fortify its identity, its existence and future propagation and its activities through a moral and legal case. That case invariably involves exploitation of moral and legal values that are presented as universal, so as to compel acceptance by an adversary, but in reality are interpreted in a way unique to the ideology.

Propaganda

Bentley regarded ideology as a weapon between groups to expand or create normative orders. For him ideology was propaganda. Ideologies in that context "*deceive outsiders about the intentions of the group.*" In the process "*they may deceive the very people who express them,*" because propagandists can end up believing their own propaganda.[71] Propaganda is a particular aspect of ideological discourse. Whilst it may primarily be aimed at an adversary in order to defend and propagate the ideology, it is rarely separated from the wider ideological debate within a group. For it to be effective, it has also to be presented as 'truth.' Mixing of propaganda with wider debate and its presentation as 'truth' can unconsciously cause propaganda to become absorbed by the group as aspects of its ideology.

Propaganda exploits the full range of rhetorical techniques from language games to historical and cultural myths. It aims to accentuate the positive aspects of its ideology while drawing a veil over it weaknesses. Propaganda similarly also accentuates the weaknesses of an adversary's ideology while ignoring its strengths. One consequence of this highly selective and polarised rhetoric is to accentuate difference between

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[70] Mosca, G. (1939). *The Ruling Classes*. p. 70. Quoted in Op. Cit., Grundy, K. M. and Weinstein, K. G (1974).
[71] Quoted in Op. Cit., Grundy, K., M, & Weinstein, K. G. (1974). p. 5.

ideologies and hence increasing conflict. Another consequence is to encourage the growth of extremist ideas on both sides.

Transcendental Aims and Myths

Georges Sorel understood ideology as synonymous with myth. He declared that individuals:

> *"participating in a great social movement always picture their coming action as a battle in which their cause is certain to triumph. These constructions, knowledge of which is so important for historians, I propose to call myths."[72]*

Sorel's preference for the term myth rather than ideology is based on the assumption of a self-transcending or spiritual motive behind human political action. He believed humans act to create "*an imaginary world placed ahead of the present world.*" For Sorel, political movements are arguably acting for 'holy' causes that "*depend entirely on*" the individual.[73] He saw myths as unitary events contributing to the establishment of future institutions comprising a utopia.

This transcendental nature of ideology introduces the normally theological concepts of 'spiritual' or 'holy' and so is often ignored in political analysis. In the broader sense of the meaning these concepts have, however, applicability in secular and 'scientific' ideologies. Without them individuals will be unable to make the necessary self-sacrifice in establishing, defending and propagating their ideology, especially through the use of life-threatening violence. It was partly this link between theological and political spiritually that led to the idea of "political religions" developing after the French revolution.[74]

All three of these functions of ideology are not mutually exclusive. They are different aspects of the wider ideology phenomenon and all ideologies comprise elements that aim to increase cohesion, defend against attack and employ propaganda and myth in their rhetoric. Collectively, they provide a reasonably comprehensive view of the

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[72] Sorel, G. (1941). *Reflections on Violence.* New York: Peter Smith p.22. Quoted in Ibid p.6.
[73] Ibid p.30. Quoted in Ibid.
[74] Alexis de Tocqueville invoked the idea of political or secular religions in his *The Old Regime and the Revolution* (1856) when describing the emotional response to the French Revolution. For a fuller discussion see: Burleigh, M. (2007). *Sacred causes : the clash of religion and politics, from the great war to the war on terror*. New York: Harper Perennial.

functions and manifestations of ideology necessary for this study.

Features of Ideology

Sectarianism in Ideology

The multiplicity of interpretation possible gives ideologies a dynamic property. All major ideologies lead to 'sectarian' division. There are many forms of liberalism, conservatism, socialism and communism; each one competes with others for political supremacy. Similarly, when Maududi developed his Islamist concept of *al-hakimiyya* as an end and identified jihad as the means of achieving its goals, he would not have imagined (and possibly not wished) that Al Qaeda and other Islamist groups would virtually invert the means and ends by becoming jihadi movements.

Ideology is a set of ideas, arranged as a pattern but modular and arrange-able. Human rights in one ideology may emphasize freedom of speech; in another they might mean freedom from degrading abuse. That is why both Liberal Democracies and Islamists claim to champion human rights and accuse each other of failing to do so. In reality, they have subtly different conceptions of particular aspects of human rights. These component concepts can be problematic when mixed in an ideology. For example how does one prioritise liberty over equality if we believe in both? Also, each one of these concepts is very difficult to define. What does liberty mean in reality? Especially when it has to be compromised to allow for other necessary concepts such as security. The almost impossible task of defining and prioritizing these ideas means that ideologies morph when faced with political and social reality. The process of change causes some groups to establish themselves to 'revive' an aspect of ideology that has been lost during the evolutionary process and other groups to 'modernize' by introducing new concepts or priorities. These changes lead to disintegration and political 'sectarianism'.

Social Factors

Mannheim stressed the importance of identifying the social conditions of ideology. This, along with the hermeneutic school's view that texts make sense only in the context in which they were written, provides a necessary filter for ideological analysis. Authors of liberal ideology, such as Isaiah Berlin and Karl Popper, emphasized 'negative liberty' because they were writing in the 1940-1950s background of totalitarian alternatives.

Similarly, when Al Qaeda talks about human liberty, it does so largely in the social context of Muslims living predominantly in oppressive non-democratic regimes from which it draws its grievance narrative and its primary target audience. Al Qaeda virtually never provides a positive illustration of the liberties it proposes to deliver apart from the promise of an absence of Western influence in Muslim affairs. Instead it too points to the absence of liberty, to the political oppression present in most Muslim countries, as its primary focus of delivering human rights.

Ideologies can give raise to, or arise out of social movements. These movements have been defined in a number of ways with some researchers almost interchanging the definitions of social movements and ideologies. In common understanding, however, social movements are groups of people who coalesce around a common set of shared social, political or economic grievances. Whilst they may share a grievance narrative, a desire to change the status quo and a commitment to activism, the groups tend to have different views on the strategies and tactics necessary to address their grievance. They may also have very different conceptions of the end-state they wish to achieve. These differences arise out of their different ideologies. For example, Marxist ideology inspired a broad range of social movements ranging from the UK's Labour Party, with its broad appeal, to the highly militant and smaller Baader Meinhoff terror network. Al Qaeda and the Muslim Brotherhood are both part of a wider social movement in the Muslim world with a shared view of grievances against Western and Muslim political leadership. They have similar ideological goals but differ in their conception of how these should be achieved.

At the individual level, ideologies are shaped by and shape the character of individuals. Most ideologies are the product of intellectuals who react to perceived problems in society with a new way of responding to them. Not all these ideological thinkers have the capacity to mobilise support for their ideology. That requires a visionary and charismatic leader. Individuals are often attracted to particular aspect of an ideology because of a personality need. This may be the need to belong to an in-group or because of an emotional response such as fear or anger. For example, research indicates that members of animal rights groups are more likely than the average individual to

experience anger.[75]   Such individuals may be simultaneously active in more than one ideology such as the case of women's rights activists also involved in anti-nuclear weapons protests. They may in some circumstances transfer from one social protest group to another. For example, Adam Gadhan, Al Qaeda's English language spokesman grew up as Jew in the USA and was involved with the environmental protest movement but he later converting to Al Qaeda. Just as personality traits can drive an individual towards a particular ideology, adopting an ideology can manifest itself as "*a drastic change in attitudes and behaviour*"[76] of an individual.

Ideology, Strategy and Style

According to some analysts, a group's political and military strategy stems from its ideology, its "*beliefs, values, principles, and objectives – however ill-defined or tenuous.*"[77] As such, ideology plays an important role in influencing, supporting and justifying decisions made by a group. However, the relationship is not one-way. There is ample evidence to show that strategic and tactical considerations affect the development or modification of ideology. For example, when a Christian critic challenged the Anglican Church over the deliberate and sustained bombing of German civilians by the RAF during the Second World War, the Archbishop of Canterbury responded by declaring:

> *"In my mind we have no business to be at war at all unless by fighting we can, or believe we can, serve the purpose of God. If believing that we enter upon war it becomes a primary duty to fight effectively. Indeed, this consideration then takes precedence of nearly all others. The worst of all things is to fight and do it ineffectively. Therefore while I agree with you that the strategic consideration cannot stand alone it becomes very nearly decisive for our conduct."[78]*

The fundamentally pacifistic teachings of Christianity, to turn the other cheek, had been expanded to cover war as a "necessary evil" by St Augustine in the 5th Century. War in the Augustinian context was essentially a conflict between armed combatants. William Temple, the Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1942 was amongst many in the contemporary era who further expanded St Augustine's argument of 'the lesser evil' to include

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[75] Herzog, H. A., & Golden, L. L. (2009). Moral Emotions and Social Activism: The case of Animal Rights. *Journal of Social Issues* (65), p. 485-500.

[76] Veldhuis, T., & Staun, J. (2009). *Islamist Radicalisation: A Root Cause Model.* Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael. Den Haag: Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael.

[77] Smith, M. L. (1995). Fighting for Ireland? The Military Strategy of the Irish Republican Movement. London: Routledge. Cited in Drake, C. M. (1998). Terrorists' Target Selection . New York: St Martin's Press Inc.

[78] William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury. (1942, Dec 5-10). writing to Ashley Sampson. *W. Temple Paper, 57.* Lambeth Palace Library.

deliberate targeting of civilians on the basis of strategic necessity. Similar examples of strategic necessity dictating the evolution of religious and nonreligious ideologies are to be found in other traditions. This link between ideology and strategy also exists in the realm of non-violent political and social strategies. Ideology, therefore, shapes strategic decision-making and is also shaped by it.

Some analysts claim that ideology determines how a group organises itself. Ideology certainly affects a group's political style by determining its propensity to be realist, republican, courtly or bureaucratic, for example. This will shape its organisational structure in a general sense but detailed structure is affected much more by strategic and tactical considerations. For example, groups involved in terrorism differ from those undertaking insurgencies and those involved in established regimes. The relationship between ideology and political style is explored in more detail in another chapter.

Ideology and Religion

Ideology and religion occupy much of the same conceptual space. Both provide beliefs, values, principles and objectives by which a group defines its identity and aims. They have been used as interchangeable terms in the context of politics. Depending on how each is defined,[79] however, there are differences and there is a dearth of definitions or theories to help identify these differences. Sociologist Daniel Bell has highlighted the apparent persistence of religion compared to the relative transient nature of man-made political ideologies:

> *"From Voltaire to Marx every Enlightenment thinker thought that religion would disappear in the 20th Century because religion was fetishism, animistic superstition. Well, it's not true, because religion is a response, and sometimes a very coherent response, to the existential predicaments faced by all men in all times. Empires have crumbled; political systems have crumbled; economic systems have crumbled. The great historical religions have survived."[80]*

Bell sums up an underlying paradox facing postmodern liberal democracies. The Enlightenment thinkers who seemed to get so much right, as witnessed by the unprecedented advances in science and technology and in the field of humanities,

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[79] Here the term religion is used to describe the major 'revealed' religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam etc as apposed to paganistic religions, 'scientific' religions or 'political' religions such as communism. Ideology is used only in the sense of political ideology.

[80] Daniel, B. (1989, February). Critique of Modernization Theory. *New York Times* .

appeared to have misunderstood the phenomenon of religion. It seems that religion has a propensity to absorb, develop and respond to social change in a way that most "man-made" ideologies cannot. Marx, ironically, provides a good description of religion:

> *"Religion is the general theory of the world, its encyclopaedic compendium, its logic in popular form, its spiritual point d'honneur, its enthusiasm, its moral sanction, its solemn complement, its general basis of consolation and justification."*[81]

This generic theory of the world and life appears more resilient in history than the more specific political post-Enlightenment ideologies.

Mannheim's concept of a stratified ideology, that the 'particular' ideology of a group is sub-set of the 'total' ideology or worldview (*Weltanschauung*) of the society from where it draws its wider adherents, helps explain a part of the relationship between religion and ideology. Religion provides one of the most significant influences on a society's worldview, not just through beliefs but also through its historical impact on ethics, law and culture. Worldview shapes associated political ideologies. Political ideologies will in turn modify religious interpretation over time. This process is visible in the development of Islamism as a religio-political ideology and its subsequent impact on theology of Islamic seminaries in India, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. The Islamist example further illustrates the complex and interactive relationships between the different strata of worldviews and ideologies. Islamism was in part a response to orientalism, a western phenomenon, and the Christian Churches' attacks on Islam during the 19th Century. Therefore, Muslim religious worldviews changed over time by both the internal development of a political ideology in societies as well as by the external influence of orientalism and Christianity.

Other differences centre on the purpose of human creation. This tends to be either ignored by political ideology or, as in the case of communism, an "accidental" scientific account of it is provided. In theology, the purpose of creation, both of man and the universe, is a central theme. Political ideology mainly considers the current life of man whereas religions offer the continuum of an afterlife or reincarnation. These differences appear to have a stronger emotional appeal to humans, both at a personal and at a social level, accounting for the persistence of religious belief in the face of a strong political and

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[81] Marx-Engles. (n.d.). Gesamtausgabe. *Volume 1 section 1 Part 1 p.607.* Quoted in Wilkinson, P. (1971). *Social Movement.* London: Macmillan. p.57

academic assault by scientific rationalism. While ideologies have transcendental ideas, religions are based on the very idea of the transcendental, giving them a more powerful and versatile motivational influence over their adherents.

Arguably, political ideology tends to be more social context specific than religion. For example, democracy as a concept has been in existence for more than 2 millennia but it only became a significant political force in the last 200 years. It needed societies where communication and education was sufficiently advanced to enable the level of awareness and debate necessary for public decision-making. Unsurprisingly, democracy achieved initial traction in the philosophically educated and concentrated community of ancient Athens, a small city-state at the time. It subsequently re-established in Western nations during the industrial period when printing, literacy and urbanisation provided the conditions necessary for "*government by the people for the people*".

Communist ideology also relied heavily on industrialisation and urbanisation to expose and respond to the inequalities of class structure in society. These inequalities had existed in preindustrial societies but it would have been very difficult for any ideologue to champion and mobilise on behalf of a largely illiterate peasantry, spread thinly across a nation and with whom there was no means of mass communication. Once the concept of class struggle had been developed in industrialised Europe it could be transported and adapted to the largely agrarian society of Russia where Tsarist misrule could be represented in terms of a class struggle. Religions, while providing more intrusive dictates on social behaviour, tend to have equal traction in rural and urban society. Although Weber postulates that the "*alienated urban population*" is "*more amenable to the appeals of religious movements than the more traditionalized peasantry,*"[82] Buruma and Margalit would argue that religions have created the myth of the 'sinful city' and so favour the urban over the rural, if anything.[83] These apparently conflicting theories of religious appeal prove the comparative versatility of religion over ideologies as a shaper of worldview. This difference, like others, is subtle and debatable.

Ideological Justifications for Violence

Walter Reich points to a self-sanction mechanism that stops people from committing

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[82] Op. Cit., Wilkinson, P. (1971). p.64.
[83] Buruma, I., & Margalit, A. (2005). *Occidentalism.* London: Atlantic Books. p.14.

inhumane acts. Such scruples can be overcome by "… *reconstructing conduct as serving moral purposes, by obscuring personal agency in detrimental activities, by disregarding or misrepresenting the injurious consequences of one's actions, or by blaming and dehumanising the victims*." [84] Reich is highlighting a human need for moral justification and of obscuring personal agency before indulging in horrific actions. The resulting justification and strength of case put forward is strongest in societies with the strongest ethical codes. This psychological need can have many ideological manifestations.

Violence in ideologies has often been justified using "*Lasswell's principle that violence is an instrument of influence which is rationally applied … (in) context of political action.*"[85] As such it is useful to those wishing to defend an existing order from attack. The defenders' violence is legitimised against the inherent aggression of an attacker. This is a major theme in Al Qaeda's ideological arguments but Al Qaeda also seeks to establish a new ideology. It is unusual for ideologies to establish themselves unopposed and so violence becomes inevitable. Even in 'expansionist'[86] ideologies violence is seen as 'a means rather than an end in it self'. Usually, these ideologies acknowledge the irrationality of violence for its own sake and sometimes are apposed to it on principle. They necessarily have then to establish elaborate philosophical arguments to justify violence. [87]

For example, Heinrich von Treitschke argued that superior might was an indicator of cultural excellence and conceded that if a superior political system could be established without violence then the non-violent option should be pursued. However, he could see no practical means of achieving German self-determination and triumph without the use of violence. He argued that Christianity lacked a moral code: "*The chief commands of Christianity are love and liberty for conscience. A moral code is exactly what is lacking, and therein its very morality lies.*" Its ethics lay in the maxim that "*every Christian is bound to know himself, to develop his personality and act in accordance with it.*" He then applies to the State what he calls this "*deeper and truly Christian ethics,*" with the assumption that "*its very personality is power,*" to conclude that the State's "*highest moral duty is to uphold*

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[84] Reich, W. (1998). *Origins of Terrorism*. Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson. p.161.
[85] Op. Cit., Grundy, K., M, & Weinstein, K. G. (1974). p.91.
[86] Expansionist ideologies believe a normative order deemed superior can be imposed on an alien group. See:
Op. Cit., Grundy, K., M, & Weinstein, K. G. (1974). p. 14.
[87] Ibid p. 47-66.

that power."[88]   In this elaborate way, Treitschke provides a 'Christian' ethical justification for the violence necessary to establish a Machiavellian imperial regime.

A post-modern ideological development is the 'intrinsic' justifications of violence. This idea shifts the justification of violence away from a means of 'social engineering' to a lifestyle argument.[89] Violence is justified as a way of, or even the bases of, achieving self-development. This concept has been championed by Franz Fanon and Islamist ideologue from Sayyid Qutb to bin Laden. Violence as a lifestyle for the individual is closely linked to violence in support of the liberation of the collective, 'oppressed.' A compelling argument is required of the benefits that an individual will gain in self-improvement through engaging in violence for a cause.[90] Often those arguments deploy notions of sacred duty with resultant spiritual salvation, based on appropriate myths.

Intrinsic justifications of violence tend to be offered by revolutionary causes. That can present the individual with a conflict of loyalties. "*Should the worker fight for his class or his nation?*"[91] In the context of militant Islamists, especially Al Qaeda, this conflict of loyalties most often manifests itself as being between the obligation to Islam and to the nations. Traditionally, Islam has tended to reinforce rather than weaken familial, tribal and national identities and so Islamists have addressed the conflict by emphasising loyalty to the collective community, *ummah*, over that due to the nation and have used the concept of *takfir*[92] to discredit current political leadership. They have created the myth of a future caliphate to compensate for the loss of national loyalty.

Birth, Propagation and Death

A question little explored by theorists of ideology is what leads to the emergence, propagation and decline of an ideology? According to Plamenatz, "*The understanding of how ideas and institutions arise, how they are related to one another, how they change, comes long after they have arisen.*"[93] By looking at the historical context in which ideologies begin, spread and decline it is possible to develop theories or models to understand how current ideologies came about, what sustains them and what is likely to

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[88] Treitschke, H. v. (1916). *Politics.* (B. T. Dougdale & De Bille, Trans.) New York: The Macmillan Company.
[89] Op. Cit., Grundy, K., M, & Weinstein, K. G. (1974). p.92.
[90] Ibid
[91] Ibid.
[92] The practice of one Muslim declaring another Muslim an unbeliever or *kafir*
[93] Op. Cit., Plamenatz, J. (1971). p.43-44.

lead to their continued success or decline. This study accepts, tests and employs Dekmejian's theory that extremist ideologies develops in situations of political and social crises.[94]

Ideologies need specific situations to propagate and achieve a significant following. For example, Tolstoy conceived of the idea of non-violent political resistance[95] but he had no success with it in Russia. Ghandi attempted to deploy Tolstoy's idea in his struggle in South Africa as an educated and Westernised lawyer and failed. It was the politically restrained character of the British Imperial regime in India and Ghandi's newly constructed charismatic religious persona of a simple *fakir* that combined to produce a measure of success with non-violent resistance. Opportunity, political circumstance and charismatic personality, consequently play a part in the establishment of an ideology. These features, along with an apparent realisation of success, led to the spread and prominence of Islamism too. Success in this case is where a theoretical paradigm shift in thinking achieves practical reality. It is what might be called the 'Roger Banister'[96] effect and is a psychological factor that manifests itself as belief in ultimate success, either overtly or subliminally.

Communism was no more than a political theory developed by Marx and Engels until the excesses of the Tsarist autocracy provided the opportunity for the theory to explain the crisis in Russia in terms of a class struggle as well as to provide a solution in the form of an alternative political system. That opportunity inspired the Bolshevik revolution and the success of that revolution lead to the propagation of Communism throughout the world as a political reality. The Bolshevik success served to reinforce communism's ideological claim to be the ultimate political system for the modern scientific world. It also gave credence to its strategic claims about revolutionary methodology as way of changing political order.

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[94] Op. Cit., Dekmejian, H. (1995). p.5.

[95] Tolstoy, L. (1894). *The Kingdom of God Is Within You.* (C. Garnett, Trans.) New York: http://www.kingdomnow.org/withinyou.html.

[96] Roger Banister was the first man to run the sub- four-minute mile. For nearly 60 years, runners had attempted to break the four-minute mile barrier. Within weeks of Roger Banister breaking the record several runners ran the mile under four minutes and set new records. The example illustrates some psychological theories regarding the relationship between belief and achievement. Whilst these theories generally relate to sport, there is no reason why they should not apply to competition in the field of politics.

Similarly, Nazi ideology took root in Germany due to the harsh political and economic conditions following its defeat in WWI. This provided opportunities for fascist ideological responses and the Nazi party emerged. The Nazis would however not have succeeded in established control over Germany and most of Europe in under two years had it not been for the Party's ability to exploit opportunities; firstly through political manipulation of the great depression to achieve power in Germany and then through successful employment of manoeuverist warfare (blitzkrieg) strategies to expand into neighbouring countries. Its military successes in particular seemed to 'prove' the Nazi theories of national and racial supremacy. Success consequently reaffirmed the faith of committed Nazi and recruited erstwhile sceptics.

Both communism and Nazism died when they failed to sustain their early successes. The strength of Communism lay in its ideological ideals of equality, prosperity and human fulfilment. When it failed to provide these, it gradually collapsed, largely through internal ideological disillusionment. Nazism promised political supremacy through military might. When it was decisively defeated by militarily means, it evaporated as a viable political philosophy. Ideologies therefore die when they fail to make their utopian dreams a reality. That can usually only happen after they have succeeded in establishing an independent community; otherwise the utopian dream remains dormant awaiting fulfilment through a revolution.

Rivalry

Ideologies compete. Success of an ideology threatens its competitors; its failure emboldens its rivals. The success of the Nazis led to an alliance between the West and the Soviet Union against it. The collapse of the Nazi regime led almost immediately to a dangerous rivalry between the West and the Soviets in the form of the Cold War. When the Soviet Union collapsed, Western liberal democratic philosophers claimed ultimate victory by declaring what Fukuyama called the 'end of history'. Samuel Huntington, recognising the enduring nature of human conflict, theorised the 'Clash of Civilisations,' a concept that Al Qaeda has attempted to bring about as a reality through competition.

The experience of conflict with rivals and ultimate victory over them can change ideologies. Confrontation with the Nazis, the price paid for victory and the emerging threat of communism led to the realization amongst western nations of the need for

profound change in the manner in which politics was conducted between them; from competition to cooperation.[97]   The result is a Europe in which war between European states is unthinkable for the first time in over a millennium. That change in ideology of real politics greatly strengthened liberal democracy.

Western liberal democracies seem to have adapted less positively to their success in the Cold War. The initial response was to rapidly disengage from Afghanistan and Pakistan, leaving a sudden power vacuum in an unstable region. On the other hand, the West chose to rapidly engage in Iraq over its invasion of Kuwait and continued to pursue Iraq for over a decade resulting in a crippling combination of sanctions and bombings under the guise of policing the No-Fly zones.   The consequence has been an increased perception that the West is driven by self-interest and hegemonic ambitions resulting in an opportunity for ideologies with anti-western rhetoric to resonate in the non-western world.

Rivalry between ideologies need not be political or military. Even when it is expressed in political or military terms, the most threatening element underlying ideological rivalry is what Buruma and Margalit call the "*imperialism of the mind.*" Their hypothesis of Occidentalism is a phenomenon that is an "*expression of a bitter resentment towards an offensive display of superiority by the West, based on alleged superiority of reason.*" [98] Particularly, it is "*spreading the Western belief in scientism, the faith in science as the only way to gain knowledge,*" that embitters rival philosophical cultures. Romanticism began as a rejection to Enlightenment rationalism, the core tradition of Western philosophy. It took root in Germany where it gave birth to the concept of *volkisch* communities. Such concepts and other ideas led to the development of National Socialism as an ideological rejection of both Western liberal democracy and Marxism.

Rejection of other ideologies is the natural consequence of Manichaeism, an almost universal feature of ideologies. Ideologies comprise myths or narratives of a clash between 'light' and 'darkness,' 'good' and 'evil,' 'science' and 'superstition' or 'freedom' and 'oppression.' These conflicts of concepts invariably end up as a clash of cultures, as distinctions between 'them' and 'us.'   Ideologies pit themselves against their polar

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[97] That change was arguably inspired more by the strategic reality of potential conflict with the USSR than by any ideological imperative. Nevertheless, it became ideologically absorbed and the notion that democracies don't go to war with each other was born.
[98] Op. Cit., Buruma, I., & Margalit, A. (2005). p. 95.

opposites: liberalism against totalitarianism or communism against capitalism. Where these opposites are not obvious, they have to be constructed. In the ideological clash between the West and the East, the West is viewed as worshiping materialism. According to Occidentalists, *"[by] worshiping the false god of materialism, the West becomes the realm of evil, which spreads its poison by colonizing the realm of the good."*[99]

Hindu nationalism, or Hindutva ideology, and Islamism are manifestations of Occidentalism. Both absorbed elements of Romanticism in their ideology and immerged as rivals to communism and Western liberal democracy. Both ideologies exploited opportunities presented to them and have been emboldened by their successes. Al Qaeda's version of Islamism has now defined its ultimate success as the failure of Western liberal democracy's apparent hegemony.

Ideology of Modern Terrorism

Violence to create terror seems to have been an accepted feature of ancient political control.[100] Its basis in what Western philosophers referred to as the state of nature and what Muslim philosophers call *jihalia* (the state of ignorance) needed little justification and ideological articulation. Terrorism justified itself as an exemplar punishment and as a means of reducing violence by dissuading a challenge to established authority. Ancient terrorist movements such as the Zealot Sicarii offered ideological justification for revolt against the Romans but their ideology did not specifically address terrorism as a tactic.[101] The "intellectual justification" for modern terrorism is credited to the German

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[99] Ibid p. 106-7.

[100] See, for example, Daniel Moran, who states " *War does not loom large in the work of John Locke or Montesquieu, or David Hume, or John Stuart Mill … most writers were content to follow Locke … in envisioning the international arena as akin to a state of nature."* Moran, D. (n.d.). *Strategy in the Contemporary World.* Retrieved July 20, 2011 from clausewitz.com: http://www.clausewitz.com/readings/Moran-StrategicTheory.pdf

[101] Op. Cit., Rapoport, D. C. (1984). Although Rapoport suggests that the Zealot Sicarii terrorism was inspired by a messianic myth and goes on to claim that "*The nature of their messianic doctrines simultaneously suggested the object of terror and permitted methods necessary to achieve it*", he does not actually explain how the terrorism was justified by the Jews involved. Indeed, he admits that, "*Our sources provide no information on the personal stress that the methods of the Jewish terrorists might have created for them.*" (p.674). The only implied explanation is the Biblical injunction that Israel commit *herem*, a war without limits, in which all persons, young or old, and property should be destroyed.   As such, the situation is similar to other ancient uses of terror – it is justified as divine or 'self-evident truth', which does not need articulation. Also, the Biblical teaching was accessible to all parts of Jewish society at all times. Few Jews exploited the Biblical injunction to commit terror. While we do not know how, if at all, the Zealot Sicarii justified their use of terror it is likely that their particular response to the political and social crisis caused them to interpret the Bible as a justifying their terrorism.

revolutionary Karl Heinzen who Walter Laqueur described as modern terrorism's *"great visionary."* [102]

Heinzen's original contribution to terrorist ideology included regarding it as a transnational phenomena. He provided both ideological and material justification for its use and specifically argued for the bombing of civilian populations. His style of ideological construction was also prescient. He attacked the state and the church for the hypocrisy of their ethics, arguing that they instrumentalised murder. Consequently, not only was murder justifiable against these institutions but also it was the most appropriate response. Terrorism, he argued, had the potential to be a progressive tool for violence as well as having the capacity to deliver a progressive revolution.[103] He even elevated suicide as praiseworthy in revolution by applauding Brutus and Cassius for killing themselves once their Republican cause had been lost. As such his ideas were remarkably prophetic.

The ideological trajectory from Heinzen to the current champions of terrorism, Al Qaeda, is somewhat opaque but it is evident that he had an impact on political discourse. Major political philosophers and revolutionaries of the time debated his writings, often critically. For example, both Engels and Marx were moved to denounce him. His ideas about targeting civilians were endorsed, albeit only in the context of state sanctioned violence, by strategists Douhet and Liddell-Hart in their contributions to the concept of total war. The precedents set by the employment of total war ideas during the Second World War have been exploited by bin Laden.[104] Bin Laden and his followers have also perfected Heinzen's teaching that revolutionaries should exploit science for terrorism against enemies as well as using scientific knowledge to avoid discovery.

Political Myth

Just like ideology, the concept of myth has been employed in diverse ways. Marx held that ideology was used to create myths, an unsurprising view given his belief that ideology was false conciseness. Sorel believed that ideology and myth were the same,

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[102] Quoted in Bessner, D., & Stauch, M. (2010). Karl Heinzen and the Intallectual Origins of Modern Terrorism. *Terrorism and Political Violence , 22* (2). p.143.
[103] Ibid p. 144.
[104] Laden, O. B. (Oct/Nov 1996). The New Powder Keg in the Middle East. Nida'ul Islam (15).

particularly when dealing with 'holy' or transcendental claims. However, there are more useful ways to define and understand myth as a component of ideology.

Of the many definitions of myths, this Chapter will regard myth as both a story and a way of looking at the world. In common usage myths are largely assumed to be false but in the context of political analysis, the truth or falsity of a myth is irrelevant. What matters is that those who believe it accept a myth as true, because for them the myth is "*a reality lived*."[105] As William McNeill says, "*The same words that constitute truth for some are, and always will be, myth for others, who inherit or embrace different assumptions and organising concepts about the world.*"[106] This feature of myths poses analytical problems.

Firstly, conventional academic analysis is difficult because myths elude "*the critical efforts of 'intellectual philosophy'. Unlike a programme or a prediction, myth cannot be refuted.*"[107] Secondly, because myths define a community's politics and because communities are invariably in contention with each other, differences based on mythical claims can be intractable as they lack rational resolution. The situation is complecated by the belief (usualy in both parties) that they are dealing with an absolute truth or ethical claim whilst the other is dealing with a fantasy. Therefore, political anlysis of myths requires a detached and non-judgemental approach. According to Gardener, "*myths are designed to deal with problems of human existence which seem insoluble; they embody and express such dilemma in a coherently structured form and so serve to render them intelligible.*"[108] The problem is that mythical explanations are generally intelligible only to those who believe in them.

Theories of Myth – Psychological verses Sociological

The influence of Freud and Jung resulted in theories suggesting that myths were primarily a psychological manifestation. Mythmakers such as Marx are claimed to have developed ideas of class struggles in response to deep-rooted psychological conflicts within themselves. As most myths are not the product of individuals, Jung developed

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[105] Bronislaw Malinowski, Magic, Science and Religion (Garden City, NY: Anchor Doubleday, 1954) p. 100.
[106] Quoted in: Jacob Cilmo, M. G. (2002). *Social Memory and History*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield. p.25
[107] Georges Sorel, T. (1961). *Reflections on Violence*. New York: Collier Books.p.52. Quoted in Tudor, H. (1972). *Political Myth*. London: Macmillan. p.15.
[108] Howard Gardener, The Quest for Mind: Piaget, Levi Strauss, and the Structuralist Movement, second edition (Chicago: University of Chicago press, 1981), p.148.

the theory of a collective unconscious that contained all the internal conflicts, paranoia and other psychological features found in individuals. Tudor strongly disagrees with this position arguing that whilst myths do have a psychological impact on the recipients, they originate mainly from external causes; *"real and present prospect of persecution, war, starvation or frustrated ambition."*[109] He instead stresses the social theory of myth as strengtheners of tradition, belief and social cohesion. At the same time, he emphasises the role of the mythmaker, the individual.

It is here that a slight contradiction is apparent in Tudor's assessment. The mythmaker is an individual with psychological as well as sociological influences. Therefore, the mythmaker's personality is likely to influence his or her thinking. When a mythmaker's personality trait matches a societal concern then a myth may be most successfully created, adapted or advanced for political effect. This was certainly the case with Islamist ideologues such as Qutb, as will be discussed in other chapters.

Lasswell saw power as compensation for personality needs. He identified *"indoctrination with a mission"* and exposure to *"extremes of indulgence and deprivation"* as significant drivers of political personality.[110] For example, Hannibal was indoctrinated *"with burning hatred for Rome and loyalty to Carthage,"* by his father. This apparently shaped his political behaviour and attitude towards the conflict between the two superpowers of the age. Gustavus Adolphus parents' indoctrination that he be a champion for Protestantism seems to have been a significant motivator for his military campaign against Catholic forces in Germany. Genghis Khan, *"born into a broken down family of Mongols with memories of a heroic past but surrounded by present adversity,"* is believed to have had a *"decisive influence"* from his mother in preparing him to restore the family's position.[111] Lesswell considers this example typical of the role of the mother in indoctrinating the *"burning ambition for restoration and revenge,"* often seen in political personalities.

Alexander the Great's mother's *"soaring ambition"* shaped his personality through extreme indulgence. Frederick the Great and Peter the Great are examples of political

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[109] Op. Cit., Tudor, H. (1972). p. 39-46.
[110] DiRenzo, G. J. (1974). *Personality and Politics*. New York: Anchor Books. p.38-54.
[111] Ibid.

leaders who's worldviews were determined by experiencing extreme emotional deprivation in early life. In all of Lesswell examples, the political leaders were indoctrinated with both generic myths from within their community and by an individual desire to change their environment in order to establish a mythical past or a utopian ideal. Their family background and the influence of parents were crucial to the process of myth absorption and development.

However, Tudor is right to the extent that an individual cannot alone perpetuate a myth. A myth must live amongst the collective. What Tudor calls myth, psychologists call 'collective memory', "*those shared remembrances that identify a group, giving it a sense of its past and defining its aspirations for the future.*"[112] The two concepts are virtually identical. As myths live in the social arena, it is societal discrimination and taboos that confront or restrain the creations of mythmakers. That is why most political leaders harness existing myths rather than create new ones. Revolutionary leaders need to modify existing myths or establish new ones to change society's perception of itself and where it wants to go. To do that, society must be sufficiently disenchanted with its existing worldview and must be in need of a new explanation for the challenges that face it. In other words, myths deal with social and political crises. Myths are particularly suited to dealing with the conundrums and paradoxes that such crises reveal. According to Robertson:

> *"very often, the problem being "solved" by a myth is a contradiction or a paradox, something which is beyond the power of reason or rational logic to resolve…… Dramatic retelling provides catharsis, as Aristotle pointed out without tragedy, which the audience - the participants in the myth - take to be an explanation, a structured understanding of the original problem."[113]*

The apparent contradictions in Freud, Jung and Tudor and others' theories can be resolved by absorbing their ideas into a theory of myth in relation to ideology.

Characteristics of Myths

In order to achieve these dramatic effects, myths have certain characteristics. Firstly the main characters within myths are larger than life. They can be individual heroes or

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[112] Brundage, W. F. (2000). *Where These Memories Grow* . University of North Carolina Press.
[113] Robertson, J. O. (1980). *American Myth, American Reality.* New York: Hill and Wang. p 2-4.

people but they are invariably special and with a chosen destiny. Secondly myths rely on events outside normal historical time. Usually, these events occur at the beginning or at the end of history for a particular group. The symbolic power of the beginning or "origin" is often exploited to determine the path of a people towards a utopian future at the end of human existence. This characteristic is found in all societies including the West. Eliade points out that the:

"Reformation began the return to the Bible and dreamed of recovering the experience of the primitive Church, or even the earliest Christian communities. The French revolution had its paradigmatic models in the Romans and the Spartans."[114]

Similarly American mythology draws on the Pilgrim Fathers and the early leaders of the American State as inspirations for the American dream. Salafi inspired Al Qaeda is also an example of a movement that sees its future in a return to an imagined past, as discussed elsewhere.   A particular Islamic concept exploited by reformists and revivalists alike is the "straight path", which underpins the theological concept of constant decay and renewal. Its particular manifestation in Al Qaeda's ideology will be discussed in another chapter but it is important to note that Eliade sees it as a universal feature of myth:

"Things recede in time from their origin, they lose their strength, decay and eventually die. The only way to restore things to the bloom of their youth is, therefore, to repeat the act that brought them in to being in the first place." [115]

The conception of history is therefore critical to myths. It determines how the 'origin' is conceived and what 'acts' are believed to have established it. This does not mean that a myth can live as a purely historical story. It must remain valid in the present:

"To be myth, a story must assert the abiding and primordial presence of sacred realities in the temporal world of everyday affairs. And this is something most political myths fail

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[114] Murcia Eliade, Myth and Reality, translated Willard Trask (New York: Harper, 1963) p 34.
[115] Mircia Eliade discussed in Op. Cit., Tudor, H. (1972). p. 61.

to do."[116]

Tudor unnecessarily limits the application of Eliade's maxim to supernatural or religious myths because of the reference to the sacred. Secular ideologies too hold some concepts as sacred and so Eliade's point has wider applicability. When Nazi ideology and communism failed to deliver the values they held as 'sacred', progress through social and economic determinism or supremacy through racial and military superiority, they collapsed. Their collapse further demonstrates that myths struggle to survive a clear failure to deliver political and social promises. Al Qaeda's ideology has similarly to demonstrate success in its sacred endeavour. It is unlikely to survive the failure to deliver its political and social objectives.

Geography is a characteristic of myths as they usually centre on places of special significance or power. Jerusalem, for example, has mythical significance for the world's major religions. Al Qaeda's very creation was a response to a perceived encroachment of Muslim lands by the West. It has subsequently resurrected the idea of an Islamic Caliphate, through which its ideology achieves a geographic meaning, as its ultimate aim.

Theories suggest that the symbolic language of myths and the themes contained in them appear to be universal. This is thought to result from the commonality of human psychology and of human societal experience. Because myths are often absorbed as part of social learning, the rhetor rarely needs to replay any part of the narrative. Instead, mythical symbols and themes are subliminally referenced or assumed as "commonplaces". Islamism in general and Al Qaeda in particular also exploit universal mythical symbols and commonplaces. However, indoctrination through formal and informal education plays a significant role in determining how these universal myths are adapted for a dominant role in a culture through emphasis on particular stories and ideas.

Finally, Rowland suggests that rhetorically myths are mostly used as strategic devices to, say, make an argument more persuasive but it is the rare occasion when they are exploited as a means of changing a worldview that they are at their most potent. "*Those*

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[116] Ibid, p.62.

who have most effectively challenged the attitudes of society - Rousseau, Freud, Marx - are those who changed its mythology."[117] Indeed, it was the use of myth to change worldview that introduced the new political ideologies of the last century including communism, fascism and Zionism. Islamism in general and Al Qaeda's particular version of it also exploits universal mythical symbols and commonplaces. This claim is tested and demonstrated in various parts of the Thesis.

Myth and Ideology

The relationship between ideology and myth is opaque because ideologies claim to be based on absolute truths, be they historical, theological or philosophical. In reality, they are based on a subjective truth, in other words, on myths. According to Sorel, ideology is actually "*a myth which has been rationalized and laid open for discussion.*"[118] That is to say, ideology comprises a rational explanation of mythical ideas. This led Tudor to conceive of "*ideology as a heterogeneous collection of practical beliefs which have been reduced to a system through being interpreted in the light of a single key doctrine*" which is "... *often a political myth.*"[119] There is an apparently contradictory view that myths are untranslatable into rational arguments and that they can be interpreted only by new myths. This is only partly true.

Myths cannot be fully rationalised but they rely on some form of argument to explain themselves when in the realm of politics, especially in the face of a challenge. Sometimes that explanation is a myth because it provides a "*practical understanding; that is to say, an understanding in which men consider the world that confronts them ... as the material for their activity.*"   On other occasions myths must be reduced to a rational, philosophical or historical argument to become an ideology. However, it can be difficult to defend ideas even in this form because the premise upon which they are based cannot usually be rationalised. Consequently, ideologies' "*simultaneous deployment of mythical and non-mythical arguments is so common that we must regard it as the rule rather than*

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[117] Frye, N. (1957). *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays.* Pinkston: Princeton University press. Quoted in Rowland, R. C. (1985). *The Rhetoric of Menachem Begin - the Myth of Redemption through Return.* Maryland: University press of America. p.14.
[118] See discussion in Op. Cit., Tudor, H. (1972). p. 121
[119] Ibid.

the exception."[120] This is partly why argumentation theories have developed concepts such as 'reasonableness', 'intellectual history' and 'social context' to help deal with the analysis of political discourse. But political myth is, amongst other things, an argument in its own right. It explains the past and projects the future. Only in the light of both can the present be understood. As Tudor says, political myth is "*not only an explanation, but also a practical argument.*"[121]

Although he does not label it as such, Tudor indicates that when myths confront practical reality, philosophical innovation occurs. For example, the early Christians were pacifists, abiding by Christ's teaching to "turn the other cheek". After the religion was ex-appropriated by Constantine I as an instrument in warfare, the myth of pacifism had to confront the use of force as a political reality. The conundrum was resolved by creating a distinction between rules that govern conduct of an individual acting in self-interest from those of an individual acting in the interest of a greater purpose. St Augustine declared: "*those men do not break the commandment which forbids killing, who make war by the authority of God's command, or being in some place of public magistracy, put to death malefactors according to their laws....*"[122] The apparent incoherence between a mythical code of morality and the political reality of the world invariably leads to the creation of justifications based on political or strategic necessity. There appears to be a universal conundrum where the "*revolutionary, no less than the magistrate, finds himself in a predicament from which he can extricate himself only by an appeal to necessity.*"[123]

As St Augustine showed, his appeal to necessity cannot stand unsupported; it has to be linked to the "authority of God's command," in any myth that advocates a religious basis for ethics. Although, many Islamist extremists have justified actions such as suicide bombings on the basis of necessity, Al Qaeda needs to justify these tactics as being part of God's command.   Hence it stresses the obligation of a particular mythical interpretation of Jihad and has created a new Islamic myth of collective punishment through the 'right of just retribution,' in its justification for violence against civilians.

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[120] Ibid. p.126.
[121] Ibid. p.1 39.
[122] Ibid. p.127.
[123] Ibid. p.129.

Just as political ideologies comprise an overarching concept such as liberalism and supporting concepts such as democracy, human rights etc, myths too come as overarching myths, sometimes called mission myths, reinforced by beliefs based on supporting myths. The overarching and supporting myths of Al Qaeda will be addressed in other chapters.

Conclusions

Ideology can best be described as the "*beliefs, values, principles and objectives*" shared by a group and which define the group's "*distinctive political identity and aims.*" As such it is not just passive but can be actively used to control beliefs and behaviours. Ideology employs, myth, culture and language to advance truths and the idea of a unified community. It is in these senses that ideology will be employed throughout this thesis.

Historically, the focus of ideology has shifted from the collective to the individual and it is in that fashion that Al Qaeda's terrorism is best understood through the prism of ideology. That ideology is distinctive in that it has successfully motivated a few individuals to project violence with an affect that was hitherto only possible for state actors. The primary means of doing this has been through Al Qaeda's rhetoric. Al Qaeda's rhetoric has to be more powerful than other political ideologies because it must motivate and shape the actions of individuals more directly than would be necessary if it has institutions to indoctrinate them. That is why the largest proportion of this thesis deals with Al Qaeda's rhetoric.

Ideology is a product of intellectual history and is communicated in a particular linguistic and rhetorical style. Often, ideologies form out of social movements who share a common set of social, political or economic grievances. Therefore, the next chapter explores both the intellectual history that has shaped Al Qaeda and the threads of political thought that it and other Islamists have absorbed from Western political history. Social and historic experiences also shape ideological texts and so the chapter identifies some of the basic social and historic conditions from which Al Qaida draws its political ideas and these are subsequently developed in chapters dealing with rhetoric.

Ideology functions to integrate and defend its group by defining who the group is, what it stands for, what it stands against and how it intends to achieve its objectives. Secondly it fortifies the group's identity, its existence and future propagation through a moral and

legal case. Another function of ideology is propaganda. This is an essentially rhetorical activity and is addressed throughout the chapters dealing with rhetoric. Finally, ideology functions to provide a 'spiritual' or transcendental dimension to political aims. This is why religion and ideology are sometimes understood as being the same. Indeed the notion that religion and political ideology live in separate domains following the separation of church and state is open to challenge. However, religion goes beyond politics in its conception of transcendental aspects of life. When religious ideas of 'holy' violence and self-sacrifice are expropriated by temporal politics, they become powerful motivators of human action. Al Qaeda's ideology should therefore be seen as distinct from the religion of Islam but it cannot be fully understood without an appreciation of Islamic theology. How all three functions are manifested in Al Qaeda's ideology will be addressed in various places throughout the thesis.

Ideologies are shaped by and shape the character of individuals. Most ideologies are the product of intellectuals who react to perceived problems in society. However, few ideological thinkers have the ability to mobilise support for their views. That requires a visionary and charismatic leader. The personality of Al Qaida's primary ideologue and leader, bin Laden, will be analysed to some degree in the penultimate chapter of this thesis to determine the impact of his persona in shaping ideology.

Sectarian divisions develop in ideologies when priorities need to be addressed. Al Qaeda is itself a 'sect' of the wider Islamist extremist movement. How it came about and how individuals have departed its fold will be considered in the next two chapters. Ideology influences a group's strategy and its political style, usually by compromising ideals in favour of necessity. These compromises in turn influence ideology and political style. How al Qaida's ideology was shaped by its strategy will be discussed in chapters Two and Three and how its political style is manifest through its textuality will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

Human nature forces ideologies to justify violence in a number of ways. The four chapters dealing with rhetoric explore the full range of rhetorical techniques employed by Al Qaeda in this endeavour. The unique nature of terrorist violence requires a particular ideological basis. Karl Heinzen was modern terrorism's premier ideologue. The stylistic parallels between Heinzen's and Al Qaeda's textuality and politics are

addressed in Chapter Seven. The development of extremist interpretation of religion through myth creation and modification is explored in the next Chapter, as is the related role of belief in apparent political success in strengthening ideology. The rivalry between Islamism and the West caused by the prejudicial views of Orientalism and Occidentalism and the consequential Manichaeism within Al Qaeda's worldview is addressed in the next two chapters.

Like ideology, myth is a concept understood and employed in diverse ways, however, it makes most sense when understood as a component of ideology. A myth is a story or a way of looking at the world that is held to be true by those who believe it. The inherent difference in truth claims by those who accept a particular myth and those who do not are a reason why mythical aspects of ideology are rarely addressed through conventional academic analysis. It is also the reason why political debate based on myth can be intractable as myth makes rational resolution difficult. Myths live in the collective memory of a community but they often need an individual to modify or create them. Myths can centre on the heroic character of individuals, the special destiny of a people, the sacred attachment to land and the method of achieving ultimate salvation. Rhetoric that exploits a society's mythical symbols and commonplaces can form the basis of persuasive arguments. The next chapter particularly deals with the creation and modification of myths as a result of political crisis in Islamic history. It considers how Islamism exploited and modified Islamic mythical conceptions to politically mobilise Muslims. It particularly looks at how Al Qaeda developed Islamist myths and introduced new ideas of political success to perpetuate its particular ideology.

In summary, ideology is a particular set of political objectives, strategies and beliefs, which are a sub-set of a wider community's worldview. Mythical claims about the purpose of existence, politics and salvation comprise a significant component of ideology. Both ideology and its mythical beliefs are articulated and perpetuated through rhetoric. They are sustained by charismatic personalities and by a belief in past successes, born out of historic opportunity, which promise future victories.

Chapter Two: Historical Anchors, Crises and Myth

Al Qaeda's ideology is anchored in history and its rhetoric is peppered with direct and indirect historical illusions. These references are designed to stimulate certain ideological and emotional responses in its audience through shared intellectual history and myths. Historical references usually relate to specific phases of history that constituted social and political crises and caused a reinterpretation of fundamental myths relating to the nature of the crisis, the method of solving it and the concept of ultimate salvation.

Dekmejian states that a *"distinguishing characteristic of religious movements is their cyclical propensity…. Islamic fundamentalism is no exception..."*[124] Cyclical propensity is the ability of religiously inspired resurgences in response to historical crises. Dekmejian identifies ten phases in Islamic history, from inception to the present day, and for each phase he identifies the political, social and spiritual crises that led to resurgence. He dose not attempt to explore how some of these phases are absorbed in the Muslim collective memory or how Muslims view history in general. Collective memory and conceptions of history are crucial to understanding Al Qaeda's ideology and messages. Al Qaeda shares to varying degrees its historical anchors with the full spectrum of Muslim society ranging from the radical militant fundamentalist Islamists to moderate liberals. It is almost impossible to assess these in isolation of Western history and attitudes. The West provides both a comparative datum for and an influence on Islamic history and worldview.

This Chapter considers the influence of significant historical anchors, associated crises and myths in Muslims societies in general and Al Qaeda in particular. It begins by discussing the conceptions of history that shape the worldview of Arabs and Muslims and how these differ from the Western perspective of history. The link between history, theology and the myths of failure and success are explored. The Western evolutionary concept of historical thought is contrasted with the consistency of morality to expose the roots of the myth of double standards. The procedural emphasis on the accuracy of historical narrative in the Muslim world and the way it communicates history are discussed in the context of a cultural divide. How these factors contribute to Al Qaeda's

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[124] Op. Cit., Dekmejian, H. (1995). p.8.

'imagined past' is identified so that Al Qaeda's interpretation of the present and its aspirations for the future can be understood. The influence of the 'Golden Age' of the Prophet and the *Rashdha* (rightly guided) Caliphate is considered as well as the factors that influenced the spread of Islam to show the roots of the subsequent construction of the myths of jihad, *hijra* (exile) and Divinely ordained victory. The development of these myths into the myths of an eternal conflict and the myth of creative violence is then described. An important factor in this development was the way Arabs and Muslims view the Crusades. The impact this view has on the wording and substance of Al Qaeda's ideology receives particular attention. The influence of Orientalism and Occidentalism in shaping political and religious outlook in the Muslim world are discussed to establish the genesis of Al Qaeda's beliefs about the future and its vision of an alternative political system. Many of the themes exposed in this Chapter will be developed in subsequent chapters.

The Muslim world comprises populations concentrated in three of the world's seven continents. There is national, linguistic, racial and political diversity and so, strictly speaking, there is no single history and no single historical interpretation within the Muslim world. There are, nevertheless, some common historical concepts, beliefs and experiences shared by most Muslims. Within these common beliefs are huge variations of which the most relevant to this work is that which is generally understood as a radical fundamentalism. The majority of Al Qaeda's ideologues are Arab and so Arab conceptions of history are most relevant but the influence of Maududi's ideas have meant that some aspects of Indian historical experience have also been absorbed. Necessity dictates, therefore, that generalisations and simplifications have to be made in identifying common historical anchors. As Al Qaeda makes similar generalisations and simplifications in its ideology, there should be no significant loss of accuracy in the analysis.

History, Theology, Crises and Myths

Conceptions of History

Islam and the West have a different conception of history, especially ethical (and spiritual) history. There are two major phases in Islamic conception of history. The first begins with the evolution of the first homo-sapian, Adam, and continues to the advent of

Islam itself. This phase recognises the concept of spiritual evolution and progress of human societies. It is characterised by bespoke Divine Revelation to each 'nation' and specific to a time and location. Two races were accorded a special place in history. Abraham, the great patriarch prophet, was rewarded for his exemplary devotion to God by having one son beget the Jewish progeny who were to lead in the process of religious evolution through being God's chosen people and the other son was to beget the Arabs from whom was to come the Prophet of Islam bringing the final Divine law. The second phase begins with the revelation of the Qur'an: "*this day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favour upon you and have chosen for you Islam as religion,*"[125] and continues till the end of time. In this second phase only material progress is possible. Man is fully developed spiritually and salvation is a matter of fulfilling spiritual obligations in whatever material environment in which he finds himself. Those societies that are spiritually strong will be blessed by success. Those that are not will be punished by failure.

History, Theology and the Myths of Failure and Success

History, in both phases, is a series of cycles in which human progress and decline is linked to spiritual enlightenment.[126] Linking the spiritual, the social and the political is a common feature of Islamic, especially fundamentalist, discourse throughout history. As Dekmejian puts it:

> "*The practice of present-day Islamist to see Islamic history in terms of cycles of decline and resurgence possesses considerable historical validity. Indeed, the causal relationship between spiritual-social-political turmoil and fundamentalist ascendancy has been a recurrent pattern in Islamic history....*"[127]

Consequently, Richard C Martin assesses that the struggles:

> "*... within Islamic societies today have to be seen as theological disputes that matter deeply; they cannot simply be reduced to social, political, or economic causes, even though a particular political*

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[125] Holy Qur'an (4,5).
[126] This metaphor comes from the Qur'an and was used by Khaldun, I. (1958). *Al Muqaddima* (Vol. Three Volumes). (F. Rosentahl, Trans.) New York: Panteon Books.
[127] Op. Cit., Dekmejian, H. (1995). p. 8.

breakdown (fitna), for example, may provide a context in which theological arguments are reformulated and vivified."[128]

The linking of theology to social, political and economic performance within society has the advantage of providing consistency between belief, policy and action. This was generally the case in early Islamic history where a spiritual and moral revolution led to a dramatic political, social and economic success of the early Muslims. In contemporary politics, it is common for Muslim leaders, both conservative and radical, to link social, political and economic decline to spiritual decline. As remedies, they often offer the converse; political salvation can only be achieved through theological salvation.

The contemporary decline in Arab and Muslim societies' material performance under the leadership of 'moderate' secular regimes provided an opportunity for Islamists to reverse the causal relationship between theological and political salvation. They contend that only an 'Islamist' political system provides an environment for individual and collective spiritual salvation. A political revolution is a pre-requisite for a spiritual revolution. Extremists such as Al Qaeda have evolved the idea to claim that the act of jihad, they believe is necessary to bring about an Islamist political order, is itself a source of individual salvation and that jihad comes with the Divine promise of political success. True salvation can only be obtained by either striving to bring about the Islamist revolution through violence or by living in the utopia that it delivers.

The idea that the political failure of Muslims, the *ummah*, is a humiliating punishment for theological laxity is a common place and has been harnessed by bin Laden:

> *"And is there any torment - in the world, in the spirit, or the senses – worse for any believer than the humiliation and weakness that his Ummah is experiencing, not to mention the defilement of her holy places, occupation of her land, and violation and plundering of her sanctuaries? …. The divine punishment afflicting the Ummah is due to the neglect of its religion…"*[129]

In Islamic theology, salvation lies on *Sirat al-Mustaqim* (the straight path) of Islamic teachings. Deviation from that path could lead to 'destruction.' Islamists rely on the

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[128] Martin, R. C., Woodward, M. R., & Atmaja, D. S. (1997). *Defenders of Reason in Islam: Mutazilism from Medieval School to Modern Symbol.* Oxford: Oneworld. Quoted in article by co-author, Richard C Martin "Research Approaches," SIM Newsletter 9 1999.

[129] Bin Laden's letter addressed to the "*Honourable Scholars of the Arabian Peninsula and Saudi Arabia in Particular.*" (995/1996) Quoted in Op. Cit., Lawrence, B. (2005). p.18

premise that the current political weakness of Muslims is Divine humiliation for their deviation from the straight path and that a return to that path (as defined by them) is the only way to escape humiliation. By linking political power to salvation, Islamist extremists like Al Qaeda have created the myth of the straight path as being the way of jihad. Alternative explanations of *Sirat al-Mustaqim* as a spiritual journey focussed on moral and spiritual reform may have considerable resonance in Islamic history and theology but they lack the tangible 'evidence' of the Islamists' political interpretation which is rooted in the political crisis forming the everyday experience of most Muslims.

Evolution versus Consistency of Moral Standards – the Myth of Double Standards

In the contemporary Western worldview, history is a linear phenomenon in which material progress and spirituality have no direct linkage. This is true for both the Hegelian view of a 'series of evolutionary concepts' and the Marxist view that evolution of ideas occurs through scientific progress. Both are Enlightenment inspired views and, according to John Gray, both views arise out of Judaeo-Christian concepts of history.[130] The Islamic conception of history, on the other hand, has similarities to the 'Romantic' idea of innocence, fall and redemption. This is a counter-Enlightenment idea. Whilst the Enlightenment inspired West tends to look to the future for its idealism, Romantic tendencies in Islamic conceptions of history tend to drive Muslim thinking towards the past, specifically to the spiritual 'Golden-age' of its advent, for inspiration.

The arguments presented above are a simplification and essentialisation of the wider debate on conceptions of history both in the West and in Islam. How pre and post Enlightenment history relate to each other is part of an elaborate and contested academic debate. For example, Lowith suggests that modern ideas about history are largely secularised versions of Judeo-Christian history.[131] Blumenberg, who claims that Christian history actually became secularised soon after the resurrection rather than the Enlightenment, challenges him.[132] Also, views of Western Christians and Western secularists are not the same on the issue. Similar diversity of views will exist in the Islamic context. However, there are general differences in conceptions between the East

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[130] Op. Cit., Gray, J (2003). p.7.
[131] See Lowith, K. (1949). *Meaning in History.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
[132] For a brief account of the debate see McKnight, S. A. (1990). The Legitimacy of the Modern Age: The Lowith-Blumenberg Debate in Light of Recent Scholarship. *The Political Science Reviewer , 19* (1), 177-195.

and West, which impact at least some aspects of the ethical debate between the two societies.

Islamic ethical codes were established over 1400 years ago and, by definition, are consistent and everlasting. For the West, however, what was once acceptable behaviour can now be deemed unacceptable on the basis of human progress. Consequently, when Westerners make comparisons between Islam and the West it is on the bases of their contemporary standards. The Muslims on the other hand see themselves and the West in a broader historical and ethical framework. This conceptual difference accounts, in part, for the frequent allegations of double standards and hypocrisy against the West by Muslims. For example, Saddam's gassing of the Kurds during the 1980s was heavily criticised by the West as an inhumane attack on civilians using weapons of mass destruction. Islamists point out that the Royal Air Force carried out similar actions in the 1920s. If the West condoned that, then why is Iraq being punished some fifty years later for the same thing?

Osama bin Laden uses this apparent disparity to great effect. His reference to the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are designed to highlight an apparent hypocrisy.[133] The West justifies its acts of mass killing of civilians but when Al Qaeda members undertake operations that kill a relatively small number of civilians, they are condemned as terrorist actions:

> " *The evidence overwhelmingly shows America and Israel killing the weaker men, women, and children in the Muslim world and elsewhere…. Nor should one forget the deliberate, premeditated dropping of the H-bombs on cities with their entire populations of children, elderly, and women, as was the case with Hiroshima and Nagazaki. … America continues to claim that it is upholding the banner of freedom and humanity, yet it perpetrated deeds which you would not find the most ravenous of animals debasing themselves to do.*"[134]

Furthermore, Al Qaeda's statements are designed to resonate concurrently on a number of different planes. Bin Laden simultaneously taps into the common ethical belief that killing of innocents is wrong as a means to discredit the West and raise hostility against it whilst implicitly invoking the right of just retribution for Muslims. The West used the

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[133] Op. Cit., Hegghammer, T. (2003). p.31 and p.50. Bin Laden in Interview for Nida'ul Islam November 1996 and Interview with John Miller of ABC News May 1998.
[134] Op. Cit., Hegghammer, T. (2003). p.28. Osama bin Laden Interview for Nida'ul Islam November 1996.

concept of 'lesser evil' to justify the dropping of atom bombs on Japan, arguing that more lives would have been lost in fighting the war if the bombs had not been used. Bin Laden implies (but carefully avoids stating) a similar argument by declaring that the lives of hundreds and thousands of Muslims will continue to be lost unless the West is stopped by force, even if that force is primarily directed at civilians. Therefore, the myth of double standards by the West in international relations and ethical standards is not a creation of Al Qaeda. It arises to a large degree out of the difference in the conception of history between the Islamic world and the West and is a useful device in Al Qaeda's ideological construction, particularly in the creation of a Manichean worldview.

Accuracy of Historical Narrative

Another disparity in the role of history between Islamic and Western societies relates to the perception of accuracy in historical narrative. Both Western and Islamic civilisations have contributed to the development of methodologies to introduce the spirit of sceptical[135] inquiry and to increase the reliability of historical analysis[136] but a difference exists in how history is viewed in the popular culture of the two worlds. This difference is largely caused by the relatively sparse influence of academic education in contemporary Muslim societies. The West regards history through intellectual scepticism. Facts are open to challenge. In popular Islamic culture, the predominant belief is that historical narrative is factual. This belief arises out of the elaborate procedures used to ensure accuracy of the *hadith* (sayings and practice of the Prophet) where sources were verified and the chain of narrators catalogued. Bernard Lewis' life-long study of Islam concludes that it places a religious importance on historical accuracy. He goes on to point out that:

> *"In the great age of Islamic civilization, in the period that in Europe we call the Middle Ages, the amount of historical literature is enormous, not in quantity alone, but also in quality and sophistication. It's vastly better than anything we find in the European world since Ancient Greece and Rome."*[137]

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[135] Ibn Sina and Al-Ghazali championed sceptical enquiry some 500 years before Descartes.
[136] For example, Ibn Khaldun's the Muqaddimah (1377), introduced scientific methodology to the study of history.
[137] Lewis, B. (2004, April 15). Islam's Interpreter: Bernard Lewis talks about his seventy years spent studying the Middle East—and his thoughts on the region's future. *Atlantic Unbound April 29, 2004 Interviews*. (E. Wasserman, Interviewer) http://www.theatlantic.com/unbound/interviews/int2004-04-29.htm.

Some orientalists observed that "*accuracy is abhorrent to the Oriental Mind*"[138] and made only grudging acknowledgements of past Arab achievements, "*Although the ancient Arabs acquired in a somewhat higher degree the science of dialectics, their descendants are singularly deficient in the logical faculty.*"[139] Such views appear to rely on prejudiced anecdotal observations of imperial servants and at best only reflect the decline in Arab intellectual capacity during the colonial period. [140] A more defendable critical analysis is offered by Arafat who points out that while a reliable, authoritative and uninterrupted chain of account was essential for recording legal issues, it was "*not essential to provide a continuous chain of authorities or even to give authorities at all,*" when writing Islamic history.[141] This was certainly the case in much of the work of the Prophet's primary biographer, Ibn Ishaq and "*that is why Malik the jurist had no regard for Ibn Ishaq.*" These reservations were however limited to a few contemporary men of learning and were motivated only by the inclusion of some "*odd tales.*" On the whole, Ibn Ishaq's biography provides the most comprehensive account of the Prophet's life and has been accepted as authoritative on the popular assumption that it was produced with the same meticulous zeal as the hadith traditions. Accuracy, real or perceived, is therefore a feature of contemporary popular Arab historical narrative.

Differences in Communicating History

Christendom uses painting, sculpture and music to depict the teachings in its sacred texts. Islam generally restricts the use of these mediums in a theological context. This has reinforced the perception of accuracy in Islam by reducing the scope for interpretation that artists might have brought to the depiction of history and theology. Textual and verbal communication, therefore, takes on a greater significance in Islamic societies. Indeed, it has been alleviated to an art form. Poetic language and eloquent speech are much prized in Muslim societies, particularly in the communication of ideas and emotions. They are essential skills for a persuasive politician or preacher. Osama bin Laden and his associates take care to present their case in suitable language and with great eloquence. Many of his statements intersperse attempts at rational debate with classical poetry. The impact of these differences in communicating history in the

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[138] Patai, R. (2002). *The Arab Mind.* Long Island City, NY: Hatherleigh Press.
[139] Ibid
[140] Said, E. W. (2003). *Orientalism*. London: Penguin. p. 38.
141 Arafat, W. N. (1976). New Light on the Story of Banu Qurayza and the Jews of Medina. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* , 100-107.

contemporary dialogue between Al Qaeda and the West will be explored in detail in later chapters dealing with rhetoric.

Cultural Divide

Apparent differences in culture, history and outlook can provide an artificial barrier to understanding of phenomena in the 'others' society. Michael Scheuer, former head of CIA's bin Laden unit and a man who arguably at one time had access to more information on Al Qaeda than any other individual in the West, suggests that cross-cultural analogies are a potential solution:

> *"… historical analogies-especially cross-cultural analogies are double-edged tools, equally capable of producing invalid comparisons as valid ones. Still, they are useful for putting events or patterns of thought foreign to a society's experience into context from which a measure of understanding can be drawn."*[142]

Scheuer offers historical figures from American culture, such as John Brown and Thomas Jefferson, as analogous examples to understand bin Laden. He draws parallels between the bloodlust of John Brown in his otherwise noble cause to abolish slavery and bin Laden's use of terror to achieve his 'righteous' religious goals. Jefferson's written justification for transitioning from peaceful negotiation to armed revolt against the British are shown to contain comparable arguments to bin Laden's declaration of jihad against the West.[143] John Gray and Buruma and Margalit employ similar techniques in their analysis of modernity and Occidentalism respectively to explain Al Qaeda. Such cross-cultural analogies can be very useful in providing context and understanding of what might otherwise be dismissed as an alien mindset, provided that the danger of invalid comparisons is avoided.

Identifying links between history and contemporary crises is the role of academics in Western society. In Muslim culture it is a daily activity of the layman. Greater use of the past to make sense of the present and shape the future is perhaps the prime distinction between the Muslim world and the West. Difference in the conception of history and ethics between the Muslim world and the West may never be resolved and there is no compelling reason why they should be, given that they reflect the outlooks of two

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[142] Anonymous. (2002). *Through Our Enemies' Eyes.* Washington, DC: Brassey's Inc. p 8.
[143] Ibid. p.5-10.

different belief systems. However, recognising that such differences exist and that they can complicate analysis is essential to understanding Al Qaeda's ideology.

Al Qaeda's Imagined Past

Al Qaeda has very little history of its own. Its intellectual roots arise out of an unlikely marriage of the militant Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood ideology and Saudi Arabia's conservative Wahhabi sect. As far as history is concerned, Al Qaeda's views are most influenced by the Wahhabi Salafi tradition of Saudi Arabia. That tradition was a reaction to aspects of Sufi religious practices that evolved around Mecca and Medina during Ottoman rule. Sufi veneration of saints and worshipping at tombs of holy men was an anathema to the Wahhabis who saw such behaviour as *shirk* (associating partners with God), the worst spiritual sin in Islam.

This phobia of *shirk* drove the Wahhabis to do more to obliterate Islamic relics than any other Muslim society. In 1925 when the Wahhabis captured Jeddah they destroyed an historic tomb that according to legend was Eve's. In Medina they destroyed an historic cemetery that included the graves of renowned early Muslims such as Prophet Mohammed's daughter and grandson. An attempt to destroy the Prophet's grave had to be stopped by the King. They did however destroy the house of the Prophet and his wife Khadija in Mecca in order to build car parks. In 2002 a magnificent Ottoman Fort near Mecca was bulldozed to make way for a hotel. Ironically, they have introduced Western consumerist style billboards throughout the country advertising things such as 'Pizza Hut.'[144]   This aspect of Saudi Salafist ideology is summed up as an "*ideology that … without an eye on history … turns its back on over one thousand years of Islam, in the name of Islam*"[145]. It is likely that the bin Laden construction company was involved in some of these activities in Saudi Arabia.

Paradoxically, Salafis ignore the bulk of Islamic jurisprudence in the four Schools of thought on the grounds that these Schools came into existence some 200 years after the advent of Islam and so contain innovative interpretations but they cite most frequently Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Wahhab who live some 600 years and 1200 years respectively after the Prophet. The paradox continues with the Salafi emphasis on the authority of

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[144] Oliveti, V. (2002). *Terror's Source.* Birmingham: Amadeus Books. p. 39-41
[145] Ibid, p x.

religious scholars and their jurisprudential decrees (fatwas). These decrees rely mostly on ancient precedence and historical accounts.

The impact of Salafi influence on Al Qaeda has been to cut it adrift from many historical anchors when developing its theological and political ideas. Obliteration of any relic that could draw Muslim worshipers anywhere other than a mosque meant that history, like religion, had to be a mental concept. Freedom from the shackles of history allows the past to be more easily imagined in terms of the present and the future. In case this ideology is ever thought of as an innovation, its adherents call it Salafi; from the Arabic word ancestors.

Al Qaeda's apparent selective use of history can partly be explained by Michael Oakshott's theory of history understood as a "practical past" and a "historical past." The "practical past" is an idea of the past that people have in their minds and access for answers to ethical questions and to inspire their actions. It is, in many ways, the mythical version of history that is mobilised in popular culture and political ideology. The "historical past" is the product of academic historians based on factual and scientifically verifiable analysis. Both concepts overlap in the real world. As Robert Graves says in I Claudius, history can be written to inform or to inspire.[146]

Influential Phases

The Golden Age and the Myth of Authenticity

The most significant and hence the most politically exploitable phase of Islamic history is that period comprising the life of the Prophet and his immediate Successors. The Prophet is the excellent Exemplar for Muslims. His followers and immediate successors are the ideal illustration of the Islamic community, the *ummah*. This period comprises the 'golden age' and is what Bernard Lewis refers to as the 'sacred history' or 'salvation history' of Islam.[147] Precedent set during this phase is the ultimate authority over interpreting Islam. It is virtually impossible for any theological argument, be it revivalist, radical or modernist to avoid alluding to this age for legitimacy.

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[146] Graves, R. (1989). *I, Claudius*. New York: Vintage Books.
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The primary scriptural source of Islam, the Qur'an, was revealed during this period. Initially it was preserved verbally through a large number of individuals committing it to memory (*hafiz*); subsequently it was recorded in textual form. Elaborate procedures were developed to ensure accuracy with the result is that there is common consensus that the Qur'an today is the same as the Qur'an revealed 1400 years ago. Elaborate measures were also taken to ensure accurate recording of the sayings and the practices of the Prophet. The original practitioners and preservers of the Qur'an and the traditions were those who had a comprehensive knowledge of both and in whose language and idiom they were recorded. Consequently, the early Muslims had a full picture of the teachings and practice of Islam. Today, however, most Muslims cannot read Arabic and even those that can, do not fully understand the subtlety and imagery of classical Arabic. The situation is worsened by the extinction of the oral tradition (*hafiz*) in Arabic learning and rampant illiteracy. Contemporary Muslims are, therefore, more reliant than their predecessors on interpreters and are poorly placed to critically judge the accuracy and wisdom of what these interpreters claim. Al Qaeda's ideologues offer their interpretations of theology to fill the vacuum of understanding and find an uncritical acceptance in parts of the Islamic community.

This situation has created a disproportionate influence of *Ulimah* (scholars). These scholars mostly emanate from three primary seats of religious learning in Sunni Islam: the Saudi seminaries in Mecca and Medina; the Al Azhar University in Egypt and the Deobandi seminary in India. All three have been politicized. The first two have been brought under the control of the Saudi and Egyptian governments respectively and the last one has been greatly influenced by Maududi's Islamist doctrine. Not only are the interpretations of the scholars' from these schools politicised but also their authority, in the view of radicals, compromised by their subservience to conventional political authority.

A conflict therefore exists between conservative scholars in established seats of learning and revolutionary Islamists over legitimacy and authority. Each one claims adherence to the authentic Islam practiced in the Golden Age. Legitimacy is primarily obtained through referencing scripture history as revealed during the Golden age. For example bin Laden quotes a Qur'anic verse to link Israeli oppression of the Palestinians with Pharaoh's oppression of the Jews:

> *"God Almighty favoured the sons of Israel when He helped them escape from Pharaoh. "Remember when We saved you from Pharaoh's people, who subjected you to a terrible torment, slaughtering your sons and sparing only your women."[148] Slaughtering children was something for which the head of oppression, unbelief, and hostility, Pharaoh, was famous, yet the sons of Israel have done the same thing to our sons in Palestine."[149]*

Such references allow bin Laden to create the myth of legitimacy as well as place Israeli behaviour in a widely recognised negative historical context within the Muslim community.

The Myth of Jihad, Hijra and Victory

Another factor affecting early Islam was conflict. For the first 13 years of the Prophet's mission, he and his small band of followers were subjected to sustained and violent oppression. An exodus from Mecca to Medina was divinely ordained to escape oppression. The exodus (known as *hijra*) is a seminal point in Islamic history. It marked the beginning of Revelation dealing with jihad as a defensive concept, allowing the use of force and promising victory with Divine help. Virtually all of the battles in which the Prophet was involved were fought during the *hijra*. The Muslims were invariably greatly outnumbered and outgunned but were ultimately victorious, a fact that confirmed the truth of the Prophet's Divine mission. The end of the *hijra* was marked by a victorious and bloodless return to Mecca.

Scripturally, jihad was authorised as a universal permission to fight for the freedom of conscience:

> *"Permission to fight is given to those against whom war is made, because they have been wronged - and Allah indeed has power to help them - Those who have been driven out from their homes unjustly only because they said, "Our Lord is Allah" - And if Allah did not repel some men by means of others, there would surely have been pulled down <u>cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques</u>, wherein the name of Allah is oft commemorated. And Allah will surely help one who helps Him."[150]*

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[148] Qur'an 2:49.
[149] Osama bin Laden. Statement aired by Al Jazeera 26/27 December 2001, in Op. Cit., Lawrence, B. (2005). p.147.
[150] Qur'an 22:44-42. Underline added for emphasis.

In reality however, Al Qaeda avoid quoting this verse in full. Elements dealing with divine promise of success are often quoted along with verses in the Qur'an that encourage perseverance, steadfastness and a robust approach to combat but those dealing with a measured and conciliatory approach are not.

While Islamists have adopted the idea of jihad in their contemporary political thinking, Al Qaeda ideologues have linked it to *hijra* and marshal triumph. This followed the 1980s Afghan war to which many Arab Islamists travelled in response to a Western-backed call for jihad and in which they were victorious against a formidable enemy. Bin Laden linked his own presence in Afghanistan with the Prophet's hijra and eventual triumph. He said that for him Afghanistan "*is reminiscent of the state of Medina (al-Munawwara), where the followers of Islam embraced the Prophet of God, God's blessings and peace be upon him, and that was the beginning of the spread of Islam.*"[151] Al Qaeda exploits the myth of *hijra* to mobilise its followers to travel to the 'lands of jihad' in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere. The myth is sustained by allusions to both the battles of the Golden Age and, more significantly, to the mujahedeen's defeat of the 'worlds greatest superpower' the USSR in Afghanistan.

The Myth of Eternal Conflict and the Myth of Creative Violence

Following the victorious return to Mecca, the rapid expansion of Islam brought it almost immediately into clash with the two superpowers of the time, the Romans and the Byzantines. Although these wars were essentially political, their close succession to the 'defensive' jihad introduced an ambiguity in the historical interpretation of the nature of Islamic warfare. Critics of Islam exploited this ambiguity by claiming it as a religion spread by force. Islamist absorbed this interpretation to a degree as it supported their expropriation of the idea of jihad to support their political struggle against occupation. These early wars, the subsequent violence of the Crusades, the brutality of the Mongol conquests, the humiliation of colonialism and the stifling contemporary hegemony of the West provides evidence for the Islamist myth of an "eternal conflict"[152] by the West against Islam.

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[151] Op. Cit., Hegghammer, T. (2003). p.67.
[152] A statement in response to the Danish Cartoons controversy by the radical Kuwaiti Shiekh Hamid al-Ali. See al-Ali, S. H. (2006, March). Retrieved February 2007 from http://www.h-alali.net.

For Islamists this historical chain of conflict demands a violent response as inspired by bin Laden and al-Zawahiri. Specifically, it demands the return to the jihad that provided the Muslims' triumph in Mecca and led to their self-determination and supremacy for many centuries. To understand the process of return to the Golden Age, al-Ali argues the need to consider the creation myth of Islam, "*the historical manifestations of any civilization go back to the steps taken at its first emanation.*"[153] Jihadis like al-Ali perpetuate the myth of a weak but faithful vanguard of Muslims who "*gained mastery through the force of iron*" rather than through Divine Grace. Al Ali's interpretation of history is at odds with the majority of Muslims who believe Islam was spread through persuasion and example. Nevertheless it is these interpretations that collectively form what Ranstorp calls an '*imagined past*' or creation myth of a glorious history based on violence that Al Qaeda strives to recreate.

The Myth of a Continuous Crusade

A most common and direct historical reference in Al Qaeda's rhetoric is to the Crusades. Bin Laden refers to the Crusaders and Jewish alliance several times in many of his speeches or interviews. In European history the crusades are an annex – a legendary adventure in a far-off land that bequeathed them romantic notions of a zealous pursuit, noble knights and secret religious orders. For Muslims they were a violent intrusion in their history that left an indelible scar. That intrusion has echoes in the subsequent colonial and post-colonial involvement of the West in the Middle East since the eighteenth century. Amin Maalouf aptly captures the continuing relevance of the Crusades in the following observation:

> *"The Arab world-simultaneously fascinated and terrified by these Franj, whom they encountered as barbarians and defeated, but who subsequently managed to dominate the earth-cannot bring itself to consider the Crusades a mere episode in the bygone past. It is often surprising to discover the extent to which the attitudes of the Arabs (and of Muslims in general) towards the West is still influenced even today by events that supposedly ended some seven centuries ago.*"[154]

The trauma of the Crusades resulted in profound changes to Arab society and history, many of which were to lead to its decline.

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[153] Ibid.

[154] Maalouf, A. (2004). *The Crusades through Arab Eyes*. (J. Rothschild, Trans.) London: Al Saqi Books.p. 265.

"Assaulted from all quarters, the Muslim world turned in on itself. It became oversensitive, defensive, intolerant, sterile-attitudes that grew steadily worse as world-wide evolution, the process from which the Muslim world felt excluded, continued. Henceforth progress was the embodiment of 'the other'."[155]

One of the most puzzling factors for the Muslims was the disparity in the perception and treatment of the 'other'. The Crusaders were often deceitful in their surrender promises, they executed captured Muslim civilians en mass and even practiced large-scale cannibalism.[156] Any lucky survivors often suffered conversions on the pain of death. The Muslims employed, for the most part, a different approach. The Archbishop of Valencia when persuading Philip III to drive out the Muslims conceded that: "*they commended nothing so much as the liberty of conscience, in all matters of religion, which the Turks and all the other Muhammadans suffer their subjects to enjoy.*"[157] These attitudes were inspired by the actions of Prophet Mohammed when he addressed the defeated Meccans. He spoke to them as Joseph had to his brethren: "*No retribution shall be exacted from you this day.*"[158] The iconic Muslim ruler, Saladin, exemplified this benign approach. According to Voltaire: "*the great enemy of the crusaders, Saladin, who having beaten the Christians in battle, bequeathed his wealth impartially to the Muslem, [Sic] Jewish and Christian poor.*"[159] This perceived disparity of approach resulted in a fear and revulsion of the Crusader nations as 'bloodthirsty, dishonest, uncultured and unclean aggressors' who simultaneously posed a political and religious threat to Muslims. These attitudes contributed to a self-enforced isolation resulting in defensiveness, intolerance and cultural stagnation amongst Muslims, especially the Arabs.

Following the Crusades, interaction between the West and Islam has been characterized by a persistent and occasionally violent one-sided domination. The resultant impressions of a history of violent intrusion, hatred and inferiority are subliminally present in the current Arab and Muslim mindset. They can be evoked by ideologues as a filter through which contemporary political and social crises can be viewed. The 2006 publication in Denmark of the cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed were taken as a grave

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[155] Ibid p.264.
[156] Ibid p. 39.
[157] Quoted in Ahmedi, A. (1997). *Rushdie Haunted by His Unholy Ghosts*. London: Avon Books. p. 8.
[158] Qur'an (chapter 12 verse 93)
[159] Voltaire, quoted in Trevor-Roper, H. (1965). *The Rise of Christian Europe*. London: Thames-Hudson. p. 104.

offence to and an attack on Islam. The controversy was not seen as an isolated incident, rather as a continuum of the motives behind the Crusades and colonialism, "*a passion, at once ancient and modern, of enmity and hatred for Islam*", "*a campaign that has not ceased for centuries.*"[160]   To prove the thesis of historical continuity, Islamists provide references for documents in European libraries containing similar insulting images of the Prophet, dating back to the Middle Ages.[161]

Scheuer postulates three reasons why bin Laden uses the 'Crusader' noun for the West in his discourse.[162]   Firstly, it describes the West in the most negative term possible. Secondly, it attempts to make mass and indiscriminate retaliation against the West more acceptable. Bin Laden assumes the Muslims' knowledge of the Crusader massacres of men, women and children and repeatedly points to the West's use of weapons of mass destruction to suggest that: just as the crusaders were bloodthirsty, indiscriminate and savage in their violence centuries ago, their Western ancestors continue in the same vein.   Therefore, the West's barbaric past justifies atrocities committed by 'Muslims' against the West as just retribution. Thirdly, it is a means of changing the perception of the enemy in the Islamic world and to provide a unity of purpose around a single enemy. Hitherto, Islamist radicals had tended to fight separate battles against their 'corrupt' national governments. Creating the myth of Islam besieged by a Crusader-Zionist alliance, bin Laden has successfully reversed the main effort of their strategic objectives from targeting the 'near enemy' to targeting the 'far enemy'.

The Crusader label is also functional in perpetuating a conspiratorial belief against Muslims.   In Lane's assessment of political ideology, conspiratorial beliefs are a widespread phenomenon characterised by the view that there "*is a secret, inscrutable, generally self-seeking, often illegitimate group behind the scenes with control over the men who hold the titles of office.*"[163]   For example, C Wright Mills points to evidence of power elites who he claims "really" govern the USA.[164]   This Western idea has acute parallels in the Muslim world reinforced by the historical fact that Western help installed virtually

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[160] Views of a participant on the Islamist *al-Ghorabaa forum*. Unknown. (2006, 19-February). *al-Ghorabaa forum*. Retrieved 2006 16-September from al-Ghorabaa.net: http://www.alghorabaa.net/forums.

[161] A number of historical references are provided at al-Muslim.net. (6 2006-March). Retrieved 2006 16-September from al-Muslim.net: http://www.almoslim.net.

[162] Anonymous. (2002). *Through Our Enemies' Eyes*. Washington, DC: Brassey's Inc.

[163] Lane, R. E. (1967). *Political Ideology*. New York, USA: The Free Press .

[164] Wright Mills, C. (1959). *The Power Elite*. New York: Oxford University Press Galaxy.

all Arab regimes in the last 100 years and many owe their continuing survival to Western support. It forms an important strand in the Manichean worldview of the Islamists who see politics in the Muslim world as being conspiratorially driven by the West. They also see the drivers for political interference as being part of a conspiracy by Crusader-Zionist and economic interest groups influencing democracy rather than by the American people's will.

Bin Laden can therefore depict the West's contemporary actions through the myth of blood thirsty, Islam-hating Crusader. Speaking about the US led invasion of Afghanistan, he said they:

> *"hit al-Qaeda positions in Khost (eastern Afghanistan) and dropped a bomb on a mosque which they said was a mistake... So they bombed the mosque and the Muslims while they were at prayers, killing 105 of them ... This is Crusaders hatred."*[165]

The Crusader is not just a Christian invader from the pages of history; the term is very much a contemporary badge for those who violate the Arab or Muslim space. Israel is the current and persistent manifestation of a violent intrusion. As Maalouf puts it, "*In the popular mind, and in some official discourse too, Israel is regarded as a new Crusader State*". It is seen variously as a Crusader implant, a Crusader outpost and a manipulator of Crusader nations.

Orientalism and Occidentalism

Orientalism and the Myths of Inferiority and Neglected Duty

After the Crusades the next major interaction between the West and the Muslim world was during the colonial phase beginning around the Eighteenth Century. During that phase a perception was developed by the conquering Western Countries that would not only shape Arab and Muslim identity but would also shape how the West saw itself, particularly in its relationship with the peoples of the region. Edward Said calls this process 'Orientalism' which he describes as a "*Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient*"; consequently "*the Orient was not*

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[165] Osama bin Laden. Statement aired by Al Jazeera 26/27 December 2001. Op. Cit., Lawrence, B. (2005). p.151-152.

(and is not) a free subject of thought or action".[166]   Orientalism also strengthened and moulded Western, particularly European, culture by confirming its relative superiority.

Therefore, the relationship between the Occident and the Orient is primarily one shaped by "*power of domination, of varying degrees of complex hegemony ...*"[167] Whilst this description is based on the superiority of power, the rhetoric and the discourse justifying Western colonialism was based on the superiority of knowledge. During the debate on continued occupation of Egypt in 1910, Belfour's main justification highlighted British knowledge of Egyptian history and the apparent inability of the Egyptians to self-govern.   The issue of political superiority was not included in the debate.[168]   Half a century later Kissinger used a creative binary opposition argument to divide the world into those who adopted an external "*Newtonian' (Western) approach to knowledge and those who had a 'non-Newtonian' internal approach (Orientals).   He used this somewhat abstract cultural difference in intelligence to argue for a pre-emptive approach to US foreign policy in order to construct a new world order.*"[169]

Said's Orientalism thesis received critical reviews and opposition. Robert Irwin berated Said for labelling all European commentators as racist, imperialist and ethnocentric.[170] He offered examples of some who were not. George Landow found fault with Said's scholarship, particularly his poor grasp of European history and his failure to acknowledge the interactive relationship between the West and the Middle East as well as the imperialism of non-European nations. Landow nevertheless accepted that Said had made a great contribution to postcolonial theory. Bernard Lewis' criticisms were the most prominent, mainly because he was forced to defend against Said's charges that Lewis perpetuated an essentialist and patronising view of Islam. At one stage, the debate between the two literally delved into the semantics of the Arabic word for revolution in defence of Lewis' claim that Islamic thought did not encourage resistance to bad government. Collectively, the critics did provide persuasive evidence that Said's work contained errors, omissions and exaggerations. However, what has not been

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[166] Said, E. W. (2003). *Orientalism.* London: Penguin. p. 3.
[167] Ibid. p5.
[168] Ibid p34.
[169] Quoted on Ibid p. 46-47.
[170] Irwin, R. G. (2007). *For Lust of Knowing: The Orientalists and Their Enemies.* London: Penguin Books Ltd. This book is a through critique of Said's Orientalism bur Irwin claims that the thesis cannot be disproved because it is ultimately a political argument. In other words, he is acknowleding that it is a political myth that can only be challenged by another myth.

seriously contested is that a generally negative and inferior view existed of the Arabic peoples, at least in the wider European colonial culture.[171]

This prejudicial view was most prevalent in the European assessment of Islam where superficial analysis frequently combined with the religious bias of the largely Christian writers of the day. The primary charge was that the Prophet Mohammed was an impostor and hence the religion of Islam was a sham. Several myths were created about Islam, some of which the fathers of Islamic militancy absorbed into their new ideology. Of most significance was the view articulated by, amongst others, Wilfred Cantwell Smith, who declared *"Muhammad preached Islam with a sword in one hand and the Quran in the other."*[172] Although the idea was challenged by many Muslim and non-Muslim scholars at the time including D W Leitz [173] and W T Arnold[174], it remained in circulation and was exploited by Maududi. Maududi concluded: *"When every method of persuasion (over 13 years of preaching) had failed, the Prophet took to the sword."*[175] With this idea, Maududi aimed to unify and mobilize the Muslims of India. At only 24 years of age and without the benefit of an in-depth study of Islam, Maududi published his theory of emancipation and unity through jihad in his book Jihad fil Islam. He was responding to Western ideas of cultural and political superiority by arguing that Islam's political inferiority resulted from Muslim's neglect of the duty of jihad. His ideas were highly influential on Sayyid Qutb and Maududi's work almost certainly influenced Hassan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, as well as Ayatollah Khomeini.

Qutb's development of Maududi's thoughts on jihad led to Faraj's book 'The Neglected Duty' in which he argued that the obligation of jihad had been neglected by the majority of Muslims, especially the scholars (the Ulamah) and that it had to be enacted as an

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[171] For example, Barnaby Rogerson, while acknowledging that Said's Orientalism thesis has been successfully countered by some academics, points out that *"It is much more difficult to disprove the orientalising tendencies in the swamp ground of opinion-makers: all the half-educated journalists, diplomats, administrators, artists, film-makers and popular historians who have entered the field."* See Rogerson, B. (2006, February 3). Unwise men in the East - Review of . *The Independant* , pp. http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/reviews/for-lust-of-knowing-the-orientalists-and-their-enemies-by-robert-irwin-525421.html.

[172] Quoted in Ahmad, M. T. (1989). *Murder in the Name of Allah.* Cambridge: Lutterworth. p. 12

[173] Dr D W Leitz wrote: '*All these arguments, advanced to prove that the purpose of jihad was to spread Islam by force, are contradicted by the Quran. The Quran says that the purpose of jihad is to protect mosques, churches, synagogues and cloisters.*' in Leitner, G. W. (1886, October). Misconceptions About The Islamic Concept Of Jihad. *Asiatic Quarterly Review* .

[174] W T Arnold assessed that: *"Islam gained its greatest and most lasting missionary triumphs in times and places in which its political power has been weakest."* Arnold, W. T. (1913). *The Preachings of Islam: a History of the Propagation of the Muslim Faith.* London: Constable and Co. Ltd, pp. 279-280.

[175] Quoted in Ahmad, M. T. (1989). *Murder in the Name of Allah.* Cambridge: Lutterworth, p. 13

individual obligation by all Muslims. Faraj fulfilled his personal obligation by assassinating Anwar Sadat. The myth of 'The Neglected Duty' was perpetuated in many jihadi texts including Abdullah Azzam's 'Join the Caravan – the Forgotten Obligation'. Azzam, and bin Laden, like Faraj lived the ideological myth of these texts, in their case in Afghanistan during the 1980's. The myth of 'The Neglected Duty' was therefore strengthened by both political opportunity and apparent success. Its roots however were partly in the historical constructions of orientalists.

Much of Al Qaeda's myth construction and rhetoric is directed against the perception of Western cultural and political superiority and Western attempts at imposing a new world order. Western failure to impose its new order and the successes of Islamists in frustrating the US are a persistent feature of Al Qaeda's discourse. On more than one occasion bin Laden taunted the USA about its ignominious withdrawal from Somalia as a sign of failure of its policy to establish a new world order.

> *"After a few blows, they ran in defeat and America forgot about …. being the world leader, and the leader of the new world order. After a few blows, they forgot about this title and left, dragging their corpses and their shameful defeat and stopped using such titles."*[176]

After 9/11 he made the following statement:

> *"The values of this Western civilization under the leadership of America have been destroyed. Those awesome symbolic towers that speak of liberty, human rights, and humanity have been destroyed. They have gone up in smoke."*[177]

Said's conclusion that "*psychologically Orientalism is a form of paranoia*"[178] was largely a theoretical observation when he drafted it in 1978. Al Qaeda's pervasive threat has transformed the paranoia in to a phobia. Responsibility for this phobia and its claim to destroy the West's myth of a new world order are a source of confidence that emboldens Al Qaeda.

Occidentalism

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[176] Op. Cit., Hegghammer, T. (2003). p.47. Osama bin Laden interview with John Miller of ABC News, May 1998.
[177] Ibid. Osama bin Laden in an interview with Al Jazeera correspondence Taysir Aluni on 1 October 2001. p.94-95.
[178] Said, E. W. (2003). p.72.

Both Orientalism and its response, Occidentalism, are based on notions of superiority and domination. In a unique study of Occidentalism, Buruma and Margalit propose that it is a deep-rooted concept in Muslim societies, especially in fundamentalist societies,[179] but its origins are largely Western. The perception of the West as decadent, Godless, materialistic, immoral, and spiritually bankrupt, so prevalent in Islamist discourse, originated from within the West as it was there that modernity first challenged traditional existence and faith-based values.

Pre-modernity Islam was deeply embedded in the cultures of Muslim societies. The impact of modernity, especially in the 20th Century caused fragmentation of traditional, nomadic, tribal and agricultural communities. Islam became dislocated from culture and had to be defined and explained to new urbanised Muslim communities. This process, referred to as '*objectification*' by Olivier Roy and others, created a market for defining Islam. The market favoured fundamentalists over other interpretations because as Roy says: "*Conservatives and fundamentalists give definite answers to the question 'what is Islam?', something that is more difficult for a Sufi, a spiritualist or a lay Muslim to do.*"[180] The combined effects of superpower politics and globalisation in the last Century increased the objectification of Islam and increased opportunities for the "*certainty and discrimination*" of radical fundamentalist ideologies shared by Al Qaeda.

The ideologues of these fundamentalist interpretations were often individuals who had studied Western philosophy, Marxism or fascism before they had intellectually encountered Islam. They absorbed Occidentalist ideas from the West and blended them with their fundamentalist reinterpretation of Islam. Occidentalism amongst Muslims is consequently a mixture resulting from "*cross-contamination, the spread of bad ideas.*"[181]

A common feature of Orientalism and Occidentalism is that their ideas are not based on objective reasoning as much as they are on myth and allusion. For example, Sayyid Qutb saw the USA as a secular Godless society and failed to appreciate that it was one of the most religious. Similarly, bin Laden's assessment of the West's apparent lack of heroic determination to defend itself when challenged proved to be based on a simplistic reading of history. Vietnam, Somalia and other 'wars of choice' did indeed result in

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[179] Op. Cit., Buruma, I., & Margalit, A. (2005).
[180] Roy, O. (2004). *Globalized Islam*. Washington DC: Columbia University press. p.154.
[181] Op. Cit., Buruma, I., & Margalit, A. (2005). p.149.

ignominious retreats but a close examination of the two World Wars and European history reveals that few civilisations are willing to endure and employ brutal violence in response to a direct attack as Western nations. Like Pearl Harbour, the attacks on 9/11 invited a 'war of necessity' response, a distinction that bin Laden and other Islamists failed to appreciate due to their mythical perceptions of Western materialism.

The Myth of Double Standards and Islamism as an Alternative to Occidental Hegemony

Another cause of contemporary Occidentalism is that Western liberalism comes as a package with capitalism or its forerunner, imperialism. Liberal values are applied differently to those within the Western camp and those outside it. The Enlightenment inspired concept of natural rights and its universal application has tended to be eclipsed by Western discrimination based on racial, religious and identity grounds. This was particularly true in the imperial era when "*justification for rights either given or withheld was closely linked to constructions of national identity.*"[182] During this period "*scrutiny for acts of violence was largely borne by the native. Because he was constructed as a barbarian, his violence was made far more obvious as further evidence of his lesser development.*"[183] Inconsistency of Western behaviour reflected inconsistencies within Western political philosophy. Tocqueville, a champion of antislavery, supported France's right to dominate Algeria. John Stuart Mill, who championed democracy at home, was supportive of Britain's colonisation of India.

The double standards were most obvious to "*subjects who having been educated by the colonial system demanded and eventually received the same rights.*"[184] Their success, which came primarily in the form of independence, was short lived. In the postcolonial era Western powers set up international systems based on human rights with the result that their "*violence, which was once a means of improving lesser races, has begun to gain legitimacy as a way to 'improve' or enforce human rights compliance.*"[185] In essence they did what Edward Said describes as provide themselves with "*authority and hegemony to*

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[182] Choudhury, C. A. Comprehending " Our" Violence: Reflections On The Liberal Universalists Tradition, National Identity And The War On Iraq. *Muslim World Journal Of Human Rights , 3* (1), 1.
[183] Frantz Fanon, The Wretched Of The Earth. Quoted In Choudhury, C. A. Comprehending " Our" Violence: Reflections On The Liberal Universalists Tradition, National Identity And The War On Iraq. *Muslim World Journal Of Human Rights , 3* (1), 2.
[184] Op. Cit., Choudhury, C. A. p.4.
[185] Ibid. p.5

adjudicate the relative value of human rights."[186] From the West's point of view it now applies violence as a "*therapeutic corrective applied to people who must be 'rescued' from their 'backwardness' or punished for and rehabilitated from their criminality and their guilt.*"[187] These arguments provided the root justifications for the War on Terror. That war led to the deaths of tens of thousands of innocent civilians, the creation of anarchy in some regions and the use of extra judicial detention in Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay with resultant abuses of human rights. Al Qaeda skilfully uses these instances as examples of the double standards and hypocrisy within its Occidentalist discourse.

The belief that Western Liberal Democracy is the "*ultimate evolutionary direction of modern societies*"[188] is another source of Occidentalist backlash. Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez leads a small group of Latin American leaders including Bolivia's Evo Morales, who virulently oppose the West. These leaders, described by their critics as post-modern dictatorships allowing partial democracy and engaging in partial totalitarianism, are attempting to establish a united opposition to the West by aligning themselves to Iran and Korea. This alliance has no ideological bond but is primarily a protest against Western domination. Such protests are invited by Osama bin Laden when he says: "*the struggle between us and America is of the utmost importance, not only to Muslims but to the entire world.*"[189] His underlying premise is that following the demise of Communism, triggered in part by Islamists; only Islam provides a philosophical alternative to the excesses of Western liberal democracy. This view is prevalent in contemporary Islamic debates and both precedes Al Qaeda and bypasses it.

According to Hassan al-Banna the modern world is a creation of Crusader-Zionists and cannot reflect the values and aspirations of Muslims. He claimed that Islam had the right and the duty, to offer an alternative political system. Muhammad Khatami, Iran's former president, makes the same point in a more sophisticated way. He declares that the modern West, shaped by the Renaissance, has led to colonialism, imperialism and world wars, pushing mankind to the brink of extinction through thermonuclear exchanges or environmental collapse. Western civilisation has undermined the family and moral

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[186] Said, E. W. (2001). Nationalism, Human Rights, And Interpretations. In E. W. Said, *Reflections On Exile And Other Essays.* London: Harverd University Press. p.429.
[187] Op. Cit., Choudhury, C. A. p.9.
[188] Fukuyama, F. (2006, August 6). The End of Chávez: History's Against Him. *The Washington Post* .
[189] OP. Cit., Hegghammer, T. (2003). Osama bin Laden Statement aired on Al Jazeera 26/27 December 2001.

restraint while encouraging sexual promiscuity and greed. It is Islam's mission to offer all nations, Muslim or not, an alternative vision.[190] These views may seem particular to Islamists but they are very much part of the Occidentalism theme identified by Buruma and Margalit. Khatami is echoing the sentiments of the Prussian Theodor Fontane in the mid nineteenth Century who bemoaned the "*cult of the Golden Calf*" which afflicted English society and would destroy it because there was no "*spirituality, no poetry*" in that materialist system.[191] Khatami's reference to the Renaissance further seeks to philosophically undermine the Occident.

Islamist Occidentalism has a tendency to unify by eclipsing other historic prejudices. Al-Banna and Khatami come from rival Sunni and Shia camps whose followers would otherwise be (and frequently are) violent rivals. Opposition to the West is often the only common cause. From the outset Al Qaeda has exhibited a simmering tension in its ideology and strategy between Islamic unity against the West and an innate dislike of the Shia. This tension was most noticeable during the Iraqi insurgency and the 2006 Israeli invasion of Lebanon and continues. Similar tensions exist with other Islamist groups including HAMAS whose acceptance in principle of negotiations with Israel is an anathema to Al Qaeda.

Renaissance, Enlightenment and Modernity

So what was it about modernity that led to an unprecedented weakening in rationalist tendencies in Islamic societies and strengthened fundamentalist views? This is a complex question but in simple terms the answer lies in the social reaction to certain historical crises. Mainly these were the cumulative experiences of the Crusades, the Mongol invasion, and the fall of the Ottoman and Mogul Empires. Amin Maalouf explains that the Crusades left the Arabs in an intellectually introverted state:

> *"Throughout the crusades, the Arabs refused to open their own society to ideas from the West. And this, in all likelihood, was the most disastrous effect of the aggression of which they were the victims."*[192]

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[190]Taheri, A. (2006, August 6). Terrorism Is Rotting The Islamic Revolution It Craves. *The Sunday Times*.
[191]Op. Cit., Buruma, I., & Margalit, A. (2005). p.25.
[192]Op. Cit., Maalouf, A. (2004) p. 264.

The invasion of Baghdad by the Mongols and their deliberate destruction of its intellectual heritage was another shock to Islamic culture. Legend has it that the Tigris turned blue with the ink from thousands of books thrown into it by the Mongols. Although the Mongols eventually converted to Islam, they could not fully recreate the tradition of philosophy and inquiry that they had destroyed. The fall of the Mogul Empire to the British and the eventual break-up of the Ottoman Empire left the Muslim world a victim of colonialism.

The reaction to these events had parallels in the situation in Europe at the time of the break-up of the mediaeval Order. There, as John Gray points out, *"movements with some affinities to radical Islam began to appear."*[193] It seems that the collapse of a stable political order creates a shock that drives societies towards alternative radical or conservative schools of thought. A significant contributor of intellectual decline was that the colonial powers invested in the education, learning and research activities of only an elite in their colonies. The education syllabuses were influenced by the European powers and organic higher education institutions were allowed to decline.

The delineation between rationality and fundamentalism has been far greater in European Christian history than in Islamic experience. Muslim fundamentalists find it difficult to totally reject rationality and Muslim rationalists cannot ignore the words of Revelation. Both schools of thought need to confront the mythical narratives of Muslim society. Islamic theology invites reason as a means of interpreting Revelation. This leads to a more complex coexistence of both types of thought in Muslim societies. What matters in applying the rationalist or fundamentalist label is the relative mix of the two schools of thought. It is consequently difficult to make precise statements such as John Gray's "*it is the fact that radical Islam rejects reason that shows it is the modern movement.*" His point is valid but the statement would be more accurate if he had said that '*radical Islam tends to reject reason*'. Al Qaeda's ideology, and especially its rhetoric contain this mix of both rational arguments and fundamentalist interpretation. One of the many implications is that Al Qaeda, in common with other Islamists, is able to expropriate aspects of modern rationalist science and philosophy and comfortably combine it with pre-modern fundamentalist theology.

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[193] Op. Cit., Gray, J (2003) p.20.

Industrialisation in the 18th and 19th century led to a dramatic rise in European power. The link between modernity, progress and power was a seductive one for non-western peoples faced by Western domination and exploitation. The response in many cases was to become like the West. Theodore Hertzel set out in the 1890s to remake the image of the Jew from a ghettoised oriental to an integrated Westerner, as part of the Zionist movement. Ataturk carried out a similar image makeover for the Turks from oriental Ottomans to European nationalists, in the wake of World War I. In both cases religion was seen as a hindrance to progress and consequently distanced from political and social influence. The assumption was that through modernisation, societies adopt Enlightenment (Western) values. They improve their political position not just through material progress but also through ideological alliance with the West.

To varying degrees, all Muslims countries have attempted the modernisation experiment. All have failed. They flirted with the three alternative routes to modernity; Communism, National Socialism and fundamentalist Islam. All three according to John Gray were products of modernity. Communism and National Socialism were attempted first and failed. Radical Islam is the only remaining alternative to Western political philosophy. The irony is that radical fundamentalist Islam is as much a product of Western political philosophy as it is of Islamic theology. Whether Islamist movements such as Al Qaeda recognised this irony is unclear and a somewhat immaterial question. They are committed to presenting themselves as an alternative with Divine legitimacy that arises wholly and exclusively out of the Golden age of Islam. As they define themselves largely by their opposition to the West, they could not possibly give the West credit for their manifesto.

Conclusions

In popular culture the West and Islam have subtly different conceptions of history. Islamic theology links the rise and fall of temporal power to spiritual purity, allowing Islamists to harness the idea that contemporary political weakness, corruption and failures of Muslims are due to their deviation from the "true Islam". Al Qaeda offers Salvation through the myth of jihad as an individual redeeming duty. Another contrast is between the "fixing" of Islamic ethics some 1400 years ago with the evolutionary

nature of Western ethics. Al Qaeda exploits this philosophical difference in its charges of hypocrisy and double standards against West.

The Islamic tradition of accuracy in narrative recording encourages a less sceptical view of history amongst Muslims and so historical references are employed in Muslim public discourse to a greater degree than in Western debate. Al Qaeda takes advantage of this uncritical approach to history in its propaganda. It selectively adopts jihadi concepts from historical figures such as Ibn Taymiyyah and capitalises on the prevailing debate in Islamist circles. Most of its ideological inheritance, however, comes from the colonial and postcolonial revolutionary ideologues of the 20th Century.

Islamic history is almost exclusively transmitted through language as other art forms are discouraged. Poetry plays a large part in this communication but the combined effects of illiteracy and failure to invest in an intellectual capacity within the Muslim world has created a void that fundamentalists filled and is now contaminated by Al Qaeda's alternative view of Islam - a view Al Qaeda believes it has the ability to impose on the world. A cultural divide exists between Islam and the West especially in the interpretation of history. Cross-cultural analogies are a useful and necessary tool, effectively employed by only a few analysts, in understanding Al Qaeda.

Al Qaeda statements frequently reference the Golden Age of Islam as a 'salvation history' for Muslims. Al Qaeda, in common with other religious terrorist organizations, advocates a vision based on recreating an imagined past. Mythical ideas of *hijra* (exile), jihad and triumph of the weak over superpowers are the primary features of a selective past and these contribute to Al Qaeda's ideological justification for the use of force not only in defence but also to regain 'lost territory' and bring salvation to the world. This phase of history has been re-interpreted in the light of subsequent conflicts with non-Muslims as part of an 'eternal conflict' by extremist ideologues. The Qur'an uses history to communicate concepts and build Islam's narrative on human existence and elements of Qur'anic history are occasionally used by Osama bin Laden to empower his message. This revisionist history legitimises the current Global Jihad and attempts to extend it to an idea of 'eternal conflict' that will end only with the defeat and domination of the West.

The Crusades left Arab and Muslim culture in an introverted, defensive, intolerant and sterile state, from which it never fully recovered. The Crusades also left an impression

of Westerners as bloodthirsty, dishonest, uncultured and unclean aggressors who simultaneously pose a political and religious threat to Muslims. Al Qaeda uses the Crusader label to exploit subliminal ideas of the imperative of a defensive struggle and to portray the West in a negative light. The label further paints the current conflict as the continuation of the 'eternal' struggle, inviting a united Muslim response.

The absence of clerical institutions that needed to be separated from political structures and Islamic theology's greater propensity to rationality meant Muslims did not experience a Western style Enlightenment. Fundamentalism and rationality have traditionally coexisted in Muslim societies in an oscillating balance but there has been a steady decline in rational thought and a corresponding increase in fundamentalism due to political weakness and a decline of investment in academic learning in Muslim countries. Radical ideologies like Al Qaeda's contain a mixture of both fundamentalist and rationalist thought. The failure of modernity, especially the failure of experiments with Western political systems, in Muslim countries has meant that radical fundamentalism has become an alluring alternative and Al Qaeda now dominates this philosophical genre.

Orientalism relied on stereotypes based on negativity and inferiority to justify domination of Orientals by Occidentals. Its justification for political domination is based on the myth of cultural or civilisational superiority. These ideas continue to be developed in the post-colonial world and form the basis of contemporary notions of creating a "New World Order" or defending freedom. As a response to Orientalist ideas, a militant Islamic school of thought emerged, initiated mainly by Maududi, based on the concept of an Islamist revivalist jihad. Like Orientalism, Islamist extremism too has been progressively developed by various ideologues to its current manifestation of a global jihad against the West led by Al Qaeda.

Occidentalism's main anti-Western themes originated in the West and are based on distaste for Western immorality, materialism and anti-heroic values. These ideas were absorbed by Islamist ideologues as they attempted to reinterpret Islam in response to modernity. Occidentalism in the Muslim world is sustained by the brutal legacy of the Crusades, the stifling domination of colonialism and the humiliating coercion of the postcolonial world. Modernity contributed to the rise of fundamentalism and the

resulting ideology was a cross-contamination of reinterpreted Islamic thought with ideas from Marxism, fascism and Western philosophy.

Evidence suggests that Islamist Occidentalists fail to fully understand the West and risk making a strategic miscalculation in their over-simplistic assessment of the West's ideological and political weakness. In the meantime, Occidentalism continues to be fuelled by perceived inequities of an international system designed by the West and used against Muslims to justify violence in the name of democracy and human rights. Signs of a wider counter Western liberal democratic current favour Al Qaeda's Occidentalist narrative. The Iranian Islamist regime has achieved considerable success in its Occidentalist discourse but instead of uniting it with Al Qaeda, sectarian tensions keep them apart. The relationship between Shia and Sunni Jihadists is consequently tense and unstable. These factors have and will continue to shape Al Qaeda's ideology.

Al Qaeda's conception of history has been influenced by Wahhabi Salafis who have used the theological concept of *shirk* to justify the destruction of a huge number of historic sites. They have consequently dislocated history from the physical to the mental sphere where it is easier to revise. Their imagined past, of an Islamic utopia, is used to interpret the present and provides an inspiration for the future.

Chapter Three: The Crisis Environment, Development of Extremism and Myth

This chapter addresses the role of political and social crises in initiating religious extremism through the medium of myth making. It tests Dekmejian's hypothesis linking social and political crises to religious extremism by exploring the incidence of extremism in a Christian and Hindu context before considering how similar conditions caused the rise of extremism in Islam. That is done by considering the impact of the crises experienced by Muslims under Western imperialism, during the post colonial and Cold War phase and since the 'War on Terror'. In the case of Islamist extremism, the development of myths significant to Al Qaeda's ideology under each phase of crisis is addressed. Specifically, those that support an alternative to Western political systems are discussed; myths relating to the nature of Divine sovereignty, jihad and success. Theological concepts are only discussed where they are mobilised to support the relevant myth.

First, an underlying explanatory cause for the hypothesis is offered. The link between extremism and political and social crises is postulated as being associated with an attack on human dignity resulting from a perceived unjust order. This section attempts to provide a fundamental connection between the emotions of indignation, humiliation, mythical reinterpretation and extreme ideology, which is elaborated upon in the subsequent examination of various cases.

Dignity, Humiliation and Justice - the Human Response to Crisis

Dekmejian cites Marx, Weber, Durkheim and Berger as proponents of the theory that socioeconomic crises lead to increased religious commitment,[194] before expanding the theory to include a wider range of crises including the crisis of the spirit, identity, culture, legitimacy etc. He does not explore the rationale behind the link between political and socioeconomic factors and a change in religiosity, especially in a tendency towards fundamentalism and extremism. His work, however, shows the relevance of a greater variety of social and political factors than merely economic issues. The question

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[194] Dekmejian, H. (1995). *Islam in Revolutions.* Syracuse University Press. Dekmejian, H. (1995). *Islam in Revolutions.* Syracuse University Press.

it begs is what is the link between social and political crises and a propensity towards extremism?

Crises come in many forms but those that affect human dignity seem to cause the deepest emotional responses. They can make fundamental social and political change an attractive option because they are often associated with a breakdown of trust in society.[195] Immanuel Kant identified the critical importance of social trust and human dignity.[196] He argued that humans possess moral practical reason and so they should treat themselves and others as an end rather than as a means. In other words, dignity is a form of inner worth from which humans derive respect from each other. Whilst dignity may be outwardly viewed in various ways by different cultural traditions, the concept is rooted in universal human behaviour.[197] For example, Kant considered dignity to possess a priceless quality. According to both the Torah and the Qur'an, the life of one human is equivalent to the whole of humanity; in other words, human life is priceless and so embodies dignity. Dignity is not merely embodied in life but in the individual as a whole comprising his or her identity, society, culture, beliefs etc. Dignity is linked to the past through collective memory or history and it is linked to the present through the manner in which humans and societies interact with each other. This is particularly the case when political transactions take place between groups of people.[198] It follows then that the nature of political relations and policies affect the dignity of the parties involved.

Measuring dignity is problematic and so philosophers such as Avishai Margalit prefer to speak in terms of humiliation, a concept that could be understood as the emotional manifestation of the absence of dignity. Humiliation[199] is the emotion that revolutionary extremists cite as a response to their perceived indignation. Hitler harnessed the

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[195] Almost all political change arises out of crises but not all political developments are extreme. According to Richard J. Bernstein, modernity itself was born out "*of historical crisis - political, epistemological, moral, and religious*". See, Tanner, K. (2006). *Historicism.* Augsburg, Germany: Fortress. p. 4.
[196] Kant, I. (1785). *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals.* (J. Bennett, Trans.)
www.earlymoderntexts.com/pdfbits/kgw1.pdf.
[197] Marranci, G. (2009). *Faith, Ideology and Fear, Muslim Identities Within Prisons and Beyond.* London, UK: Continuum.
[198] This issue is particularly debated in the context of identity, recognition and multiculturalism. For example see, Taylor, C. (1992). *Multiculturalism and "The Politics of Recognition".* Princeton , New Jersey: Princeton University Press and Rengger, N. J. (1995). Identity, Democracy and the 'Politics of Recognition'. In N. A. Sorensen, *European Identities* (pp. 225-240). Odense, Denmark: Odense University Press.
[199] For fuller study of humiliation in politics see Lindner, E. (2006). Humiliation. In W. Darity (Ed.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (IESS),* (2nd ed.). Farmington Hills: Macmillan.

collective humiliation felt by Germans over their treatment by the international community after the First World War.[200] Humiliation is also a significant factor in the Radicalisation of Islamist extremists.[201] Humiliation is not caused so much by a defeat in a conflict or the sense of cultural inferiority but by indignation over perceived injustice imposed by superior powers; the imposition of double standards, excessive punishment or the absence of a level playing field.

Kant's view that people should conduct affairs on the basis of universal principles, that is to say, "*do as you would be done by*" is reflected in many ethical traditions, particularly in Islam.[202] This universality of values and treatment is embodied in a Qur'anic concept of '*Adl*'[203], which is a particular form of justice in Islam, understood as absolute equality of treatment under the law. It is a strong component of Islamic theological beliefs and drives the vision of its utopian society. Although not often expressed in theological terms, the grievance narrative that gives rise to and sustains major Islamist movements is based on perceived absences of equality and justice as encapsulated in the idea of '*Adl'*.

This somewhat absolutist view of the ideal society based on justice is challenged by Margalit who argues instead for a decent society. He defines a decent society as one in which its institutions do not humiliate people who are subject to its authority and in which citizens do not humiliate one another or themselves. He argues that a "decent society" is based on equilibrium between liberty and equality and in which cruelty and humiliation has been eradicated. He regards such a society as being more important than a "just society."[204] How decent society establishes itself by prioritising between establishing good and eradicating bad has some interesting parallels with Islamist ideas on the subject and will be explored later in this chapter. In the meantime, it is worth noting that Margalit too endorses the link between humiliation, equality and the ideal

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[200] For example Hitler highlighted several instances of German humiliation in his speeches. The humiliation of the Treaty of Versailles, for example, was mentioned in his April 1933 speech.

[201] Veldhuis, T., & Staun, J. (2009). *Islamist Radicalisation: A Root Cause Model.* Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael. Den Haag: Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael.

[202] Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said: "*None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother that which he loves for himself.*" Quoted in books of Hadith: Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

[203] For a fuller discussion of the concept of 'Adl', see: Ahmad, H. M. (2008). *Absolute Justice, Kindness and Kinship: The Three Creative Principles.* Tilford, UK: Islam International Publications Ltd.

[204] Margalit, A. (1998). *The Decent Society.* (N. Goldblum, Trans.) Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

society, although he adopts a pragmatic rather than an idealistic position on method of its achievement.

The social and political crises that trigger sustained emotions of humiliation appear, therefore, to arise out of political and social domination of one group by another or of one people by another where repressive inequity is a dominant perception. These causes of indignity and consequential feelings of humiliation are easily exploited by ideologues. Ideologues not only focus the indignation of their flock against the alleged perpetrators of injustice but also against the system of justice that has led to their plight. The solution is therefore one that requires both the defeat of the perpetrators of oppression as well as the introduction of an alternative and more just political system. Overtly expropriating that ideal social and political system from an external source would only reinforce the humiliation of inferiority. To be pure, it has to be organic; to be able to offer ultimate salvation, it must be spiritual; to be able to inspire faith in ultimate victory, it must be mythical. To offer all of these things it cannot be ordinary; it must be fundamental and extreme.

Crises and Religious Extremism

Case studies involving Christianity and Hinduism can test and illustrate the hypothesis that extremism develops under conditions of political and social crises. These cases and associated themes can help explain the emergence and development of extremist movements in Islam under similar conditions of social and political crises.

The Dutch Reform Church

Susan Ritner studied the Dutch Reform Church's (DRC) role in establishing and sustaining the policy of Apartheid in South Africa. She describes the DRC's activities in *".... the more and more precise refinement of an ideology of apartheid, and to exercising pressure on successive governments to accept this ideology as the basis of race policy."*[205] In the 17th Century, when the church came into existence in South Africa, it did not practice racial discrimination. Discrimination only existed on a religious basis, "*between Christian and heathen, baptized and unbaptized.*" Later, in the 18th Century, the introduction of West African and Malay slave labour by the British to meet the needs of

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[205] Ritner, S. R. (1967). The Dutch Reform Church and Apartheid. *Journal of Contemporary History , 2* (4). p.17.

white settlers and the settlers' increasing dispersal amongst the Bantu tribes of the interior led to a feeling of cultural isolation. This reinforced in their minds the link between "*whiteness, Christianity, civilization as against colour, heathenism, inferiority.*"[206]

These social prejudices resulted in demands by congregations to segregate whites and coloureds, which the Church initially blocked on the grounds that they were a violation of Christian principles. In 1857, however, the DRC succumbed to social pressure. Interestingly, it justified the segregation on social grounds, as being of benefit to both communities and confirmed that it had not compromised its ideological belief in the equality of mankind.

The separation of congregations in 1881 invariably led to the separation of churches, with the establishment of a Mission Church for the coloured population. The threat from increasing intervention of the British in South Africa and the fear of Anglicisation developed nationalism in the Afrikaner and a closer bond between them and the DRC. The Boar war transformed the way the Afrikaner saw themselves, from a cultural group to a political entity. The DRC established itself at the forefront of the preservation of Afrikaner identity – its language, culture and religion.

Nationalism was a buffer against British domination and nationalism's aggressive appeal seduced many young DRC Ministers into joining the newly formed Afrikaner National Party. One such, D F Malan, rose to be Prime Minister of South Africa (1948-54). Gradually the DRC and the National Party fused as the 2 pillars of Africkaerdom.[207] These 2 organs of 'state' worked collectively to protect the interests of the poor whites by negotiating property and land rights over blacks. The post depression social crisis of the thirties presented the Afrikaners with a:

> "*... choice between two stark alternatives: integration, leading first to cultural and eventually to 'biological' assimilation; or total separation of racial groups at every point of contact to ensure absolute Afrikaner group identity and racial purity.*"[208]

The Church made the second choice. As a Minister put it,

> "*... only carrying out the policy of apartheid in the light of God's Word and with God's blessing would provide deliverance from the dark danger of colour-mixing and bastardization*".[209]

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[206] Ibid. p. 18.
[207] Ibid. p. 21.
[208] Ibid. p. 23.

Authority of 'God's Word' was necessary for the confidence of the 'theocratically-inclined lay Afrikaner' as well as to defend against criticism of the English Protestant Church that the DRC contradicted Christian teachings. To fulfil both requirements, the DRC constructed elaborate Scriptural arguments supporting three principles: unity in diversity ('pluriformity'); it is God's command that separate peoples keep their separateness intact; Christian unity is spiritual rather than racial. These arguments were developed progressively over decades and became stricter with each revision. Importantly, the process of scriptural justification converted what was a desire for segregation, motivated by Afrikaner self-preservation, into an ideology that made it a religious <u>duty</u> on the Afrikaner to resist racial integration. The political manifestation of that duty became more extreme with time as did the religious justification and the Afrikaners' commitment to the ideology. For example, some Afrikaners quoted Biblical verses to prove that according to God only a white man was human, all other races were separate species.

The DRC did not base its ideology purely on Scriptural sources nor did it develop in isolation of Western Modernist influences. Its thinking was influenced by Darwin and other modernist thinkers whose ideas were used as arguments to support the case for racial discrimination. There is also a view that the DRC's interpretations were partly absorbed by churches in the US Southern States who supported the idea of racial segregation. There was therefore a two-way process in the ideological evolution of DRC's political thought.

An important limitation in the application of the DRC case study to other extremist organizations is that the DRC did not overtly justify extreme violence and killing. However, it was in the politically advantageous position of not needing to. Having provided religious justification for apartheid and enjoying a "partnership" with the Government that enacted laws to enforce it, the Church had no need to explicitly advocate violence against blacks. It did, however, support the use of violence by the Government in enforcing the law; some of it resulted in the killing of hundreds of women and children. It was also noticeably passive in its reaction to terrorist acts by other Afrikaner groups and individuals.

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[209] Ibid. p. 24.

A detailed analysis shows that the DRC progressively departed from Christian orthodoxy under progressively severe conditions of political and social stress. In the process it developed political and religious myths to advance an alternative political system to protect the identity and interests of its primary adherents, the white Afrikaners. The DRC's ideology and its alliance with a government that essentially represented its worldview permitted the use of violence in support of its cause.

Hindu Extremism

Hinduism has generally been seen as a tolerant and pacifistic religion but it harbours an extreme, nationalistic and xenophobic element. That element became dominant in Indian politics in the form of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). BJP's initiation on 16 May 1998 of three nuclear tests began a nuclear arms race with its neighbour, Pakistan, which threatened regional peace. Although there were many longstanding political imperatives that drove India's desire to become a nuclear power, the religious overtones were evident in the symbology associated with the tests. The day of the first nuclear test, "*Buddha Purnima, is traditionally celebrated as the day of birth, enlightenment and death of the Buddha.*"[210] The bombs emerging from these tests were intended for delivery by India's Agni missile, named after the god of fire. The tests resulted in mass celebrations and calls for the construction of a temple dedicated to *Shakti* (the goddess of power) to be built near the test sites.

All of this was inspired by a doctrine known as 'Hindutva', shared by a number of right wing Hindu nationalist movements. It reflects modern social and political changes that, according to Chetan Bhatt, are characterized by *"… majoritarian, chauvinistic, anti-minority ideology of 'Hindu' supremacism.*"[211] Hindutva's roots can be traced to the Arya Samaj movement established in 1875 by Dayananda Saraswati. Described as 'revivalist' 'reformist' and 'fundamentalist,' the Arya Samaj is generally regarded as the forerunner of the current Hindu extreme nationalist trend. It developed its ideology at a time when 400 years of Muslim political domination had been replaced by British domination.

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[210] Bhatt, C. (2001). *Hindu Nationalism: origins, ideologies and modern myths.* Oxford: Berg. p. 1.
[211] Ibid.

The social threat posed by conversion to Islam had been added to by an active and effective campaign of conversion by Christian Missionaries.[212] Furthermore, the British threatened Hindu social belief systems in ways that the Muslims had not. The British banned the widow-burning practice of *Sati* and they disapproved of child marriages and aspects of the cast system. Hindus had not seen themselves as a nation at that stage but such political and social threats to their identity and beliefs caused an awakening in some Hindus, channelled by ideologues like Saraswati, to the extent that "*nationalism and Hinduism could be spoken of as synonymous.*"[213] Saraswati's Arya Samaj produced a reinterpretation of Hindu theology that attempted to compete with the intellectual sophistication of Christianity and Islam.

By the 1920s the Indian independence movement was well established as a unified coalition of the various religious groupings represented in India. The debate about the nature of a future independent India was dominated by a popular desire, supported by Ghandi, for a secular state. Some Hindus were concerned that Indian Christians would be supported by Western Christian nations, the Muslims by the Muslim world (albeit the Ottoman Empire had crumbled) but the Hindus had no country to call their own. Hindu nationalist, Vinayak Savarkar, consequently argued that the future India should become a "truly Hindu" nation. Savarkar set up the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and is credited with defining and articulating the Hindutva doctrine, which "*blames India's former Muslim rulers, as well as European colonial empires, for many of the country's present problems - such as poverty and backwardness.*"[214] The doctrine declares that Hinduism is under siege and threatened with extinction due to conversions by Islam and Christianity. In preparation for Independence, it emphasised the importance of 'reconversion campaigns' and the imperative to 'militarize Hindus'.[215]

Hindutva ideology was further shaped by post independence threats and opportunities experienced by Indians. These included the crisis of the partition, a war with China (which it lost) and several conflicts with Pakistan as well as the many armed separatist

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[212] The British Parliament passed East India Company Charter Act in 1813 permitting missionary work in India. By the following year the Anglican, Baptist and other Churches had become established in major Indian cities.
[213] Op. Cit., Bhatt, C. (2001). p.16.
[214] Sarnaik, R. (2004, January 12). *BBC News Channel: Gujarat's festering wounds.* Retrieved September 13, 2004 from News.BBC.co.uk: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/3383883.stm.
[215] Op. Cit., Bhatt, C. (2001). p.77-78.

struggles in Kashmir, Punjab and the Eastern States. Hindutva ideology inspired the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the BJP. The VHP is recognised as being at the forefront of militant and violent Hinduism. When in 2002, riots broke out in Gujarat resulting in the deaths of about 2000 people, mostly Muslims, the BJP and the VHP along with their mother organization, the RSS, stood accused of fanning the flames of religious violence.

Religious justifications underpinning the Hindutva ideology are presented in conceptual rather than scriptural terms. This involved significant reinterpretation and authentication of scriptures, reflecting the less prescriptive and definitive nature of Hindu teachings compared with those of Judeo-Christian and Islamic scriptures. Furthermore, Saraswati attempted to intellectually and theologically equate Hinduism with Christianity and Islam by removing from it many beliefs that attracted most criticism from the West. For example, Saraswati "*vigorously opposed any form of idolatry, cast restrictions and untouchability, child marriage, and restrictions on the education of women.*"[216] In creating the myth of an organic ideology with international influence, he rejected the vast majority of Hindu scriptures including the Puranas, Epics and Bhagavad-Gita, preferring to base his interpretation on some of the four Vedas, which he asserted were the literal revelation of God. This process involved an interaction with modern Western philosophy. For example, Saraswati's belief that Hinduism was "*the only true religion of humanity … was influenced by some important strands of European romantic thinking.*"[217] At the same time, Immanuel Kant accepted Saraswati's "*idea of primordial humanity arising first in Tibet and migrating to India and then the rest of the world.*"[218]

Bhatt finds this minority reinterpretation of Hindu mainstream belief, presented as authentic, authoritative and legitimate on behalf of all Hindus as remarkable:

> "*It is a moot point, both in understanding the Arya Samaj in the 1890s and the VHP in the 1990s, how an unrepresentative, parochial, minority group, professing a strikingly anomalous ideology and*

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[216] Ibid p.17.
[217] Ibid.
[218] Ibid p.16.

developed entirely outside the institutions of traditional Hinduism, could believe that it had the legitimacy, authority and competence to speak for and act on behalf of Hinduism."[219]

Bhatt's description of the gulf between the belief that extremist schools of thought have in their legitimacy, authority and competence, and the actual level of support they enjoy in the mainstream religion has resonances in the relationship between Al Qaeda and mainstream Islam. In myth making it appears that ideologues need to present their recreated worldview as the true beliefs of the constituency they wish to represent.

Common Themes

The two case studies provide themes that are repeated in the case of other religious extremists. Specifically they show that extremist doctrines develop progressively in response to perceived political and social threats. Scriptural justification is offered to support the sect's doctrine, to motivate its members and to counter criticisms from moderate parts of the religion. Scriptural underpinnings play a crucial role in the justification of any political violence necessary to preserve and spread the ideology. These extremist doctrines are influenced by and have influence on modern secular thinking.

There is little evidence to suggest that Saraswati, Savarkar or the various DRC ideologues cynically interpreted religion for political or social gain. On the contrary, such reformers often display sincerity of belief and intellectual integrity. Many of their arguments were sophisticated and are supported by powerful historical, theological and philosophical points. Taken collectively, however, the coincidences of a militant and violent interpretation of religion under conditions of political and social oppression provide evidence for the hypothesis that religion is a tool for political violence rather than being the primary cause.

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Crises in Islam and Mythical Responses

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The Crisis of Imperialism

The Muslim world went through a series of ever increasing political, theological and social crises from the late Eighteenth Century onwards. Napoleon's invasion of Egypt

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[219] Ibid p.20.

and the British destruction of the ailing Moghul Empire in India began the process. Alongside these political challenges grew the theological threat. European theologians, philosophers and anthropologists began to produce critical assessments of Islam.[220] Christian missionaries exploited these myths to convert Muslims to Christianity and to convince non-Muslims in Muslim controlled lands to convert or join the Christian condemnation of Islam. The Muslim response was to produce a number of defensive and revivalist movements from which emerged the most influential contemporary religious currents. The theological challenges of Nineteenth Century produced, amongst others, the Barailwi,[221] Deobandi[222] and Ahmadiyya[223] sects in India and the Salafi sects of the Middle East. These movements now provide the most dominant influence in Islamic societies. With the exception of the Ahmadiyya movement, they all recognise jihad as a valid form of political violence and stress it as a contemporary obligation on the believers.

While major theological diversity exists between these sects they are characterised by their revivalist tendencies, their defensive response to the challenge posed by Christianity and by an attempt to provide a teaching on political violence. The concept

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[220] For example, Reverend Karl Gottlieb Pfander's book, *Mizan-ul-Haq* (The Balance of Truth) was published in India in 1849 and was translated into a number of local languages. That book, along with a couple of others, attacked Islam and reinforced the claim that Islam was spread by the sword. A prominent Indian Muslim at the time noted the effects of these books on inciting political violence, particularly in the Pashtoon regions of India and Afghanistan, and the British Government's response to it: "*I have concluded that most of the incidents in the Frontier Region, and the violent hostility that has been created among its people, are due to the priests' books, which use excessively harsh language and repeatedly draw attention towards the subject of jihad. Ultimately, after the great publicity received by Mizan-ul-Haq and its subsequent poisonous effect, our government was forced to issue Act Number XXIII of 1867 in order to check the spread of the militant ideas of the Frontier's residents.*" See Ahmad, H. M. (2006). *The British Government and Jihad* (Originaly Published in India in 1900 as Government Angreizi aur Jihad). (T. S. Ahmed, & L. Rahman, Trans.) Farnham, Surrey: Islam International Publications Ltd.

[221] The Barailwi (alternative spelling Barelvi) sect was established in India in 1880. Its full name is *Ahle Sunnat wal Jama'at* . While sharing the basic Sunni and jurisprudential beliefs of the Deobandis, the Barailwis adopt a significantly less conservative approach, defending many of the popular traditional Sufi practices followed by Indian Muslims. Partly as a reaction to Deobandi inspired terrorist organizations, Barailwi terrorist movements have recently emerged in the shape of the Sunni Tehrik established in 1990.

[222] The Deobandi movement began in India in 1866. It is a Sunni conservative revivalist sect that has emphasised the development of religion through clerics, known as religious scholars, and madrassas (religious schools). Although it is officially apolitical, it has produced Islamist cleric and parties such as the Jamiatul Ulama-i Islam. The Tablighi Jamaat is a popular transnational evangelical offshoot of Deobandism. A number of terrorist movements also ascribe to Deobandi philosophy including the Tahrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

[223] In 1889, in Qadian, a small town in India, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908) established The Ahmadiyya Movement. He claimed to be the long-awaited *Mahdi* (reformer) and Messiah of Islam. One of the major errors that he declared had crept into Islam was that a violent Jihad was valid in the modern age. He argued that the Qur'an only permitted Jihad to defend against the genocidal policies of the early opponents of Islam. In the modern world, Islam was only under attack intellectually and so needed only intellectual defence. Armed jihad he argued was not only theologically invalid in most circumstances but was the route to disaster for Muslims. Consequently, Ahmadis have shunned non-state sponsored violence.

of the 'straight path' was the motive for revival behind each one of these movements – the crises being faced by Muslims then (and now) could only be averted through re-establishing the community (*ummah*) on the correct spiritual course. However, each differed on the degree to which that spiritual course needed to be supplemented by temporal factors, especially political activism. This activism aimed to strengthen each community through an awakening, theological research, education and collective worship. In the process the distinct identities formed, were transformed into rivalries. Jihad however was an issue that arose from time to time as a result of political violence between the Imperial power and Muslim populations and bound all but the Ahmadis. Heavy-handed repression by the British followed the Indian Mutiny of 1857 in response to which some Muslims raised the banner of jihad. Jihad was most frequently debated and enacted in the context of the perpetual conflict between the British and the Pushtoon tribes of India and Afghanistan.

This theological polemical contest between Islam and Christianity and the exploitation of jihad as a response to imperial political violence in Nineteenth Century India provided the context in which Maulana Abu Ala Maududi, "*considered to be the first complete theoretician of the modern Islamic state*"[224] developed his idea of *hakimiyya* (Sovereignty belongs to God). As a young man in his early twenties, he was commissioned by mainly Deobandi religious leaders to defend against what they considered to be false accusations against Islam by Christian scholars. One of these accusations was that Islam had been spread by the sword. After initially countering it, the idea was progressively absorbed by some Muslims. At just 24 years old and without the benefit of any formal religious or historical training, Maududi wrote his book Jihad-fil-Islam in which he postulated his idea that Islam had been established through a violent jihad and so has to be defended and re-established by similar means.

Maududi's re-interpretation and instrumentalisation of jihad was done in the environment of a wider re-evaluation of international political ideology in the wake of WW1. Young politically awakened men like Maududi desired to establish an independent entity but saw little attraction in existing regime types. The European imperial system was "*determined by a ceaseless rivalry among the powers comprising the*

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[224] Haqqani, H. (2007). Afghanistan's Islamist Groups. Current Trends in Islamist Ideology, 5, 70-82.

international system of states."[225] It culminated power through colonial excesses, transformed rivalry into history's worst martial clash and, in the process, either destroyed or weakened its constituent empires. Over 1.5 million Indians had been mobilized during the Great War, resulting in some 100,000 casualties.[226] Imperialism and the industrialisation of its wars had made Western political models unattractive.

Emerging Western alternatives, what Voegelin called 'political religions,'[227] communism, fascism and socialism also did not appeal, mainly because of their rejection or subordination of religion. Religion was a more critical component of identity for Muslims in the multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic and multi-faith structure of India than it was for other Muslims. The conundrum was heightened by the fall of the Ottoman Empire. The end of its titular caliphate jolted the Muslim world. For the first time in over 1200 years a Muslim imperial entity ceased to exist. The impact of the crisis was recognised by non-Muslim Indian leaders like Ghandi.

The only alternative for Maududi was to find a superior political model within the primary constituent of his identity, religion. That model had to define its concept of power and sovereignty differently from contemporary options and had to provide the necessary ethical framework for the aggressive violence necessary to establish this new regime type. Justification for aggressive expansionist violence is difficult to find in Islamic scripture and so the obvious solution was to rely on the myth of the straight path and resurrect another myth. That myth, "Sovereignty belongs to God" has antecedents in both the Jewish and Islamic history. That way, any use of violence would be defensive, aimed at restoring an authentic order destroyed by enemies from within and without. Hence, Maududi's creation of the concept of *hakimiyya* and his thesis of a restorative and defensive jihad in his book, *Jihad-fil-Islam*.[228]

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[225] This description comes from Heinrich Friedjung in his: Friedjung, H. (1919-22). *Das Zeitalter des Imperialismus 1884-1914.* Berlin. It is discussed in Mommsen, W. J. (1982). *Theories of Imperialism.* (P. S. Falla, Trans.) Chicago: Chicago University Press. p.4-5.
[226] Nicholson, C. (2001). *The Longman Companion to the First World War.* Harlow: Longman. p. 248
[227] Voegelin, E. (2000). *Modernity without Restraint: The Political Religions; The New Science of Politics; and Science, Politics, and Gnosticism* (Vol. 5). (M. Henningsen, Ed.) Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press.
[228] For a fuller review of Maududi's political philosophy and his impact on Islamism see: Jackson, R. (2011). *Mawlana Mawdudi* . Abingdon: Routledge. Jackson deduces that "*Maududi's Islamic political ideology represents a dangerous strand of fundamentalism.*" He considers Maududi "*a necessary creation of a time of great uncertainty and insecurity,*" who is just one of many faces of Islam "*out there.*" p. 176-177.

The Crisis of Sovereignty – Authority of Man versus Authority of God

Mauddudi's response to a political crisis was not novel. When Abdur Rahman bin Muljam shouted "*Authority belongs to God, Ali, not to you*" as he killed Ali ibn Abu Talib, the fourth Caliph of Islam, he most certainly did not know both the provenance of his slogan or its destiny. Jewish Zealots uttered similar words 600 years earlier as they attacked fellow Jews who submitted to Roman authority rather than God's law. Maududi unwittingly encapsulated the ideas of both the Zealot-Sicarii and Abdur Rahman's ilk when he coined the concept of *hakimiyya*, meaning sovereignty belongs to God. That concept has been mobilised by Islamist extremists such as Al Qaeda to kill many more Muslims than non-Muslims in their quest to establish God's authority on earth.

Abdur Rahman was a Khawarij (Arabic for 'renegades'), a group that emerged when 3 years earlier the Caliph Ali had settled a dispute with Muawiyah, his governor of Syria, through arbitration rather than through force. For some of Ali's army, arbitration was a sign of humiliating weakness. Ali was the Caliph with authority over Muawiyah and he had the means to exert that authority but he had accepted a truce - a man who represented the Almighty's religion had failed to exercise the might of his Army. That group of men believed that matters had to be settled by God and God's authority was absolute. It could be exerted by man through force but could not be compromised through negotiation. Subsequently, under the slogan "*La Hukma Illa Lillah*", meaning no rule except by Allah, they began hostilities against Muslims, forcing Ali to engage and defeat them at the battle of Nahrawan (658 AD). Abdur Rahman was one of 9 survivors of that battle. Notwithstanding the devastating effect that the assassination and the consequential end of the 'rightly guided' Caliphate had on the Muslims, they mostly rallied around Muawiyah motivated by the theological imperatives of unity and avoiding strife. Lacking popular support and political power, the Kharijites dissolved into oblivion. The Khawarij myth of political power through the Divine emerged again 1400 years later in the environment of political weakness and humiliation in the twentieth century.

Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Muslim lands were like Judea, "*occupied by an alien military power.*" Muslim leadership, like prominent Jews at the time of Roman rule over Judea, had become acquiescent in "*the desecration of God's name*" as well as absorbing

the "*culture of the conquerors.*"[229] The adoption of alien 'un-Godly' laws and customs raised in Jewish fundamentalists a reactionary adoption of 'synergism' "*with God, that is, working with God in the accomplishment of his purposes.*"[230] Admonitions of leaders such as Judus urging fellow Jews not to tolerate "mortal masters" because only God was "their Lord," awakened in some Jews an "*unconquerable passion for liberty.*" However, only a small number of Jews who thought in such terms resorted to violence and so terrorism was their primary tactic.

The Sicarii were the most notorious of these groups. "*Their goal was the eventual liberation of the Jewish people from the illegitimate rule of Rome, and they understood their own actions as consonant with the eschatological will of God.*" The Sicarii's actions were part of a "*deliberately planned strategy for liberation from Roman rule.*" The two aims of the strategy were "*to make oppression so intolerable that insurrection was inevitable, and, subsequently, to frustrate every attempt to reconcile the respective parties.*" A willingness to kill and "*permit vengeance to fall on kinsmen and friends if only they may avoid calling any man master*" were, according to the historian Josephus, the means for achieving these objectives.

The Sicarii's commitment to rebellion and violence was rooted in their firm belief that God was "*their zealous helper*" provided they remained steadfast and did not shrink from whatever measures might be necessary. If captured and tortured by the Romans, they "*held fast to their sacred principles*" believing they would become "*glorious martyrs to the purposes of God.*" The Sicarii, therefore came into existence during conditions of political crisis faced by the Jews under the political influence of a hegemonic superpower.

The political conditions under which Al Qaeda came into existence were similar. The difference, however, was that Sicarii never managed to "*exercise any power in opposition to that of the established order.*"[231] Al Qaeda was able to inflict direct harm on the West and to wield a degree of autonomous control over areas of Afghanistan, Somalia and other lands. This difference arises out of the fact that modern groups like the forerunners of Al Qaeda, the mujahedeen of Afghanistan and the GAI in Egypt, received a

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[229] Op. Cit., Rapoport, D. C. (1984). p. 669.
[230] Horsley, R. A. (1979). The Sicarii: Ancient Jewish "Terrorists". The Journal of Religion, 59 (4), 435-458.
[231]On the breakdown of the "habit of obedience," etc., see Amann, P. (1962). Revolution: A Redefinition. *Political Science Quarterly , 87*, 36-53.

degree of state-sponsorship which allowed them to develop the skills and the self-belief necessary to seriously challenge contemporary power structures. The Sicarii and most other religious terror groups in history never received state support and so were limited in their achievements.

Al Qaeda apparently saw the idea of Divine authority and the myth of exercising power synergistically with God mobilised in Afghanistan during the 1980s. That idea resulted in political and military victory. Al Qaeda subsequently championed the myth in it its 'instigation' of action against the West. So far, those acts of violence and terror can be projected as successful in that their very audacity and apparent success in inflicting harm on a superpower can be portrayed as an indication of Divine support.

Crisis of Sovereignty - Misrule and Human Rights

Adoption of the myth of *hakimiyya* was sustained and strengthened by misrule and abuse of human rights by the nominally 'independent' Muslim regimes that followed the imperial phase.[232] This new phase coincided with the Cold War. It was and remains a remarkable coincidence that almost every Muslim country had either economic (e.g. Saudi Arabia and oil) or strategic (e.g. Afghanistan and its potential to the Soviets' need for a route to a warm sea port) significance to both the West and the Soviet Block. It was in the interest of both the West and the USSR to destabilise these newly independent countries and install regimes sympathetic to their cause. Of most concern were regimes that attempted democracy in the national interest. The 1953 Anglo American orchestrated coupe to replace the Mosaddeq regime with the despotic and compliant Shah is perhaps the best example.[233] Egypt's see-saw flirtations with the Soviets and the West provides another example of how regimes in Muslim countries were forced to adopt extreme repressive measures to ensure their continuation in the face of constant

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[232] Sayyid Qutb adopted Maududi's myth and the term *hakimiyya* in the 1960s when he developed the Muslim Brotherhood ideology of an alternative political system by more explicit emphasis on the obligation of jihadi violence. It was from that route that the myth was absorbed into Al Qaeda's ideology. See, for example, Op. Cit., Jackson, R. (2011). p.176.

[233] See Ansari, A. M. (2006). *Confronting Iran.* London: Hurst. p.27-40. Ansari provides a detailed and balanced account of the political and economic factors that led to the USA and UK conspiring to replace Mosaddeq with the Shah and how the event created political myths that haunt Iranian and Western politics to this day. The Shah's subsequent compliant attitude to the West was clear at the outset when he declared to the head of the CIA in Iran that "*I owe my throne to God, my people, my army – and to you.*" p.36. The Shah's subservience to the West and his lack of legitimacy created a popular opposition against which, he instituted increasingly repressive measures. His actions were the primary cause in the subsequent emergence of the Shia Islamist revolution.

attempts at subversion by CIA or KGB agents attempting to install their man. The resultant authoritarianism and corruption created rebels and martyrs. Sayyid Qutb is perhaps the most charismatic example.

Authoritarianism was common in traditional Islamic Societies but despotic dictatorships were not. Power was limited by the law; applicable, at least in theory, equally to the ruler and his subjects. "*Strong entrenched interests in society*" also mitigated power. Mercantile guilds, the landed gentry and the bureaucratic, military and religious establishment produce powerful elites who were not appointed, paid for or answerable to the State.[234] The process of modernization or Westernization increased the power of a centralised government and weakened these 'intermediate powers' that had prevented autocracy in the past.[235] Internal and external political factors caused autocratic misrule and the resulting political crisis impacted on Islamic theological outlook. The contemporary condition of Islamic civilisation is seen by some as a political system that:

> "*...flourished, aged, declined and is struggling to revive. It has just come out of the era of colonial suppression and is struggling to ditch the stifling stranglehold of autocracies, often supported by Western government*"[236]

The crisis of misrule in a general sense is therefore a modern phenomenon which came about through political interaction with the West and sustained the core myth of the Islamist political ideology, *hakimiyya,* as a utopian solution*.*

Tawheed – the Bridge Between Deobandism and Salafism

Tawheed, the oneness of God, is a deep theological notion central to Islam that encapsulates the idea of a unique Almighty Creator. Modern revivalist movements placed that concept at the heart of their theological renewal. The Wahhabi Salafis reacted against the mystical ideas of the Sufi Turks; claiming that their practice of worshiping at shrines and employing saints for intercession were a contravention of *tawheed* and consequently qualified as the greatest sin in Islam, *shirk,* to associate partners with God. The Deobandis of India reacted against similar perceived intrusions

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[234] Lewis, B. (2004, April 15). Islam's Interpreter . *Atlantic Unbound.* (E. Wasserman, Interviewer) The Atlantic.
[235] Ibid.
[236]Malik, M. (2002). Review Essay: Bernard Lewis and the Decline of Muslim Civilization. *Middle East Policy, 9* (2) p. 161.

of Hindu practices in Islam where Muslims began to associate Divine qualities to inanimate objects. Both movements attempted to build elaborate theological and philosophical arguments aimed at linking all aspects of religion and life to the singular idea of *tawheed.* Islamists, who emerged primarily from these sects, bound their concept of *hakimiyya* and jihad to the core of Islamic theology through *tawheed. For Qutb,* jihad was valid " . . . *against every obstacle that comes into the way of worshiping God and the implementation of the divine authority on earth . . .*" Gerges understands this idea to have been the "*intellectual basis behind the exhortations of Abdullah Azzam and Ayman al-Zawahiri and ultimately the establishment of Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda.*"[237]

Focus on *tawheed* without appropriate emphasis on other theological aspects of Islam progressively introduced into this idea of absolute monotheism, a meaning of exclusivity. This interpretation contrasted with the way Ahmadis and many classical Sufis understood *tawheed* as a concept that unified God with creation and which compelled humans to a 'natural' state of harmony with humanity and with nature.

The downstream development of Islamism in Salafism and Deobandism through the Muslim Brotherhood and Jamaat-i-Islami respectively, exploited *tawheed* as a source of political empowerment and mobilisation through the construction of a series of myths. The idea of political utopia became associated with the myth of a singular conception of God, observed by the myth of a singular Islamic community (the *ummah*), living under a future mythical singular regime (an Emirate or Caliphate) and abiding by the myth of a singular law (*sharia*). The national or international system was blamed for the failures and sufferings of Muslims because these systems are made imperfect by the fact that they are man-made. The only system that can deliver true justice has to be God's law on earth.

The grand myth of Islamism is that through expelling 'un-Islamic' influences from Muslim society, a pure community can be established living in a pure legal and political framework. This logic suggests that this process will lead to a form of theological determinism from which will emerge the spiritually pure individual. This theoretical deferment of individual salvation is problematic in that Islamic theology stresses individual spiritual development. The conundrum is resolved by making the struggle,

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[237] Gerges, F. A. (2005). *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global.* Bronxville, N.Y.: Sarah Lawrence College. Prologue.

violent or otherwise, to establish the Islamist political order the primary means of individual salvation. In this respect the myth, originated by Maududi and added to by Qutb's ideas of a righteous vanguard of believers who would immanentize it, is what Voegelin referred to as a form of *Gnostic Speculation*.[238]Al Qaeda, via Abdullah Azzam, emphasized the role of the individual rather than the vanguard in this myth construction to accommodate its modest and dispersed following.

This grand myth contrasts with the alternative myth prevalent amongst some non-Islamist Muslims. Here the belief is that a pure Islamic order can only be established when sufficient individuals in a society develop morality and spirituality to a standard that will elevate the character of the community to a level where it can be considered to be pure representation of Islam. That interpretation acknowledges diversity of opinion and goes beyond tolerance to making the recognition of prophets and scriptures of other religions articles of faith. Unfortunately, few communities have achieved this. The majority of Muslim leaders have declared those that have come close, such as the Ahmadiyya movement, heretic. This clash of myths underlies the struggle between what is commonly described as extremist and moderate Islam. Al Qaeda recognises the clash and has labelled it variously as the 'inability movement' or 'neo-Qadianis'[239,240] in an aim to discredit and delegitimize the alternative worldview.

The commonality of interpretation of *tawheed*, eclipsed the theological difference that exist between the Deobandis and Salafis, especially in their Islamist wings, allowing extremists from both sides to fight side by side in the guise of Al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Supporting Myths

"Loyalty and Disavowal" – The Myths of Isolation, Clash and Activism as Religious Obligation

In addition to strategic myths that encapsulate the Islamists' goals (*sharia* based regimes etc) and their means (jihad etc), a number of other theological concepts are exploited to

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[238] Op. Cit., Voegelin, E. (2000).
[239] Qadiani is an informal and somewhat derogatory term for the main branch of the Ahmadiyya movement.
[240] Terms used for example in: Al-Zawahiri, A. (2010, September 15). *A Victorious Ummah, A Broken Crusade: Nine Years After the Start of the Crusader Campaign*. Retrieved February 10, 2011 from WorldAnalysis.Net: http://worldanalysis.net/modules/news/article.php?storyid=1476

create 'supporting' myths. Prime amongst these is the myth of political activism as religious obligation. This is based on a Salafi interpretation of some Qur'anic verses and hadith supporting a concept known as '*al wala al bara*', meaning loyalty and disavowal or love and hate.[241] In general terms the idea is based on the teaching to love what is good and to shun evil. During the advent of Islam the idea was used to encourage loyalty to fellow believers and enmity towards those that were bent on killing them because of their faith. Salafi theologians elevated the concept to a status second only to *tawheed* and deploy it to produce a "them and us" worldview with love only for their own group and an unconditional hate for the disbeliever. Extremists have used this teaching to encourage social isolation, establish a Manichean view of the world and the political activism necessary to support their view of jihad. In so doing they have constructed the myths of perpetual isolation, activism and confrontation.

Avishai Margalit advocates that it is easier to ask people not to be bad to others than to ask people to be good; because being good is a matter of personal selective perception. He says *"...there is a weighty asymmetry between eradicating evil and promoting good. It is much more urgent to remove painful evils than to promote enjoyable benefits."* In other words when it comes to the Qur'anic injunction to "*enjoin good and forbid evil,*" it can be seen as being easier and more pressing to forbid evil than to enjoin good. Certainly, that appears to be the way that Islamist extremist seem to interpret matters. Their agenda and actions are optimised towards eradicating what they consider to be evil influences, primarily foreign occupation and secular regimes, rather than offering a positive model of society. Non-extremist Islamists like the Muslim Brotherhood have to some extent managed to produce a 'good' society in certain countries by offering free education, health and welfare services. However, to a large extent, these activities are a means of winning political support rather than an end i.e. the fulfilment of a spiritual obligation to fulfil the teachings of scripture. The weakness of civil society in Muslim countries fulfilling the obligation of '*wala al bara*' allows the myths of the extremists to gain credence.

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[241] al Qahtani, S. M. (1993). *Al Wala' wa'l Bara' According to the Aqeedah of the Salaf* (Vol. 1). (O. Johnstone, Trans.) Al Firdous Publications Ltd. (UK).

The Myth of Exclusion

Another supporting myth is that no non-Muslim may permanently reside in the Arabian Peninsula. Arguably this myth was the catalyst that drove bin Laden against the House of Saud and ultimately the USA. Allowing US forces to build bases on Saudi soil was unacceptable to most devout Salafi Saudis because it had become commonplace to believe that non-Muslims could not enjoy independent existence on Arabian soil and they certainly could not undertake collective worship. The myth draws its claim from a *hadith* in which the Prophet is reported to have said that no two religions could exist in the Arabian Peninsula.[242] Early Muslims appear not to have taken the *hadith* literally but contextualised it as referring to the particular conflict during the Prophet's life. That view is supported by the Qur'an, which only bans idol worshipers from the Holy Mosque of Mecca.[243] Both the jurists, Abu Hanifa and Hanbal (followed by the Wahhabi and Salafis) speak of disbelievers (Jews and Christians) being allowed to enter the Holy Mosques and barring only some categories of idolaters.[244] No records exist of border checks or a permanent protection force for the Peninsula. Almost from the second generation, Muslim political power resided outside the Peninsula and the Islamic empires did not feel it necessary to prevent the free flow of people to that land. It seems the myth was advanced if not created by Ibn Wahhab in his drive to rid the region of external influences, which in that case were actually Ottoman Muslims.

The House of Saud exploited the myth when the King took on the title of the Defender of the Two Mosques (meaning the Mosques in Mecca and Medina). Bin Laden describes the impact of what he describes as a "big mistake" by the Saudi regime in letting the USA station its troops in that country:

> *"When the American troops entered Saudi Arabia, the land of the two holy places Mecca and Medina, there was a strong protest from the 'ulama' religious authorities and from students of the Shari'a law all over the country against the interference of American troops."[245]*

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[242] Hadith in Malik's Muwatta, Book 45, Number 45.5.18: "*Two deens [religions] shall not co-exist in the Arabian Peninsula."* Elsewhere in the more authentic Sahih Bukhari, Volume 4, Book 52, Number 288, the Prophet was reported to have said, "*Expel the pagans from the Arabian Peninsula."*

[243] Qur'an (9:28).

[244] See Tafseer Abdul Razaq al-Sanani Vol One, pages 271-272, and Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal, Hadith number 12251.

[245] Fisk, R. (1996, July 10). Interview with Usama bin Laden. *The Independent* . Quoted in Op. Cit., Hegghammer, T. (2003). p.19

There is no doubt that American occupation, as he saw it, deeply affected bin Laden and his Islamist cohort in Saudi Arabia. That is what prompted them to criticise the Saudi government. Many of them were religious scholars, the *ulama*, and were either imprisoned or exiled. However, this issue rarely arises in Al Qaeda debate involving non-Saudis indicating that the myth has mostly local resonance.

The Myth of Success

The Myth of Islamic Territory

Bernard Lewis described the 1979 revolution in Iran, out of which emerged an Islamist regime, as the first theocracy in Islamic history.[246] Led by the minority branch of Islam, the Shia political achievement stunned Sunni Islamists who despite greater numbers and more countries in which to achieve a revolution had failed. Maududi's fusion of theology and politics in developing modern Islamism had to some extent been an ideological inspiration for Ayatollah Khomeini.[247] Khomeini's success in transforming an ideology into a regime raised expectations in Maududi and his followers.[248] They did not have to wait long.

Months later the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, forcing the USA to seek proxies for a war against the USSR. With the help of the Pakistan and Saudi governments, a jihad was declared. Although the bulk of the resistance came from the Afghans, motivated by their historic allergy to invasion, the labelling of the conflict as a 'jihad' and the Saudi encouragement for Arab fighters to join it had profound consequences in developing and perpetuating the Islamist myth of jihad. Influenced by the linking of jihad to the invasion of Muslim lands in the political narrative that accompanied the Western sponsored calls for jihad, Abdullah Azzam gave Maududi and Qutb's idea of jihad as defence against political and cultural attack on Islam, a geographic dimension. He declared that invasion of even a "*date-palm size of Islamic territory*" invited jihad. He

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[246] Op. Cit., Lewis, B. (2004 15-April).
[247] See for example, Haq, F. (2009, July 7). *Viewpoints: The Islamization of Pakistan, 1979-2009* . Retrieved January 30, 2011 from The Middle East Institute :
http://www.mei.edu/PakistanCenter/ViewpointsIslamizationofPakistan19792009.aspx
[248] Dr Ahmad Farouk Maududi (son of Abul-A'ala Maududi) reports, "*Khomeini had a very old and close relationship with Abba Jaan (father). Aayaatullah Khomeini translated his books in Farsi and included it as a subject in Qum. Allama Khomeini met my father in 1963 during Hajj and my father's wish was to create a revolution in Pakistan similar to Iran. He was concerned about the success of the Iranian revolution till his last breath.*" Maududi, A. F. (1979, September 29). *Roz Naame* .

showed his theological revision of jihad to the Grand Sheikh of Saudi Arabia, bin Baz, who did not object leaving Azzam to believe it had been endorsed. This territorial myth of jihad was rooted in history and extended into the future; any land once ruled by Muslims and subsequently lost must be reclaimed. Azzam had indoctrinated bin Laden with this myth. Bin Laden later recounted *"When the invasion of Afghanistan started, I was enraged and went there at once - I arrived within days, before the end of 1979."*[249]

The Roger Banister Effect - the Myth of Jihadi Success and Impact on Strategy

The most influential and original myth sustaining Al Qaeda's ideology was created during the Soviet Afghanistan war; it was that the mujahedeen had defeated the world's greatest super power.[250] Although the Soviet defeat in Afghanistan owed a great deal to the USSR's poor political handling, the inability of its forces to adapt to insurgency warfare and the vulnerability of its aircraft to the US supplied stinger missiles, the mujahedeen were allowed to take credit for defeating the invaders. The myth was grounded in the reality of the asymmetric contest between poorly armed, inadequately trained and logistically isolated jihad inspired individuals and the might of a super-power. The theologically inspired minority of Arab fighters framed the ultimate defeat in terms of their jihad, ignoring the historical reality that defeat was the fate of all invaders, no matter how powerful, to that country. Like Roger Banister, the mujahedeen had demonstrated that what was once thought impossible was achievable. Foreign jihadi fighters left Afghanistan emboldened by the belief that they could defeat any military force in the world.

When Saddam Husain's forces invaded Kuwait in 1990 it was this mythical belief in the certainty of jihadi success that prompted bin Laden to claim to the Saudi King that the Afghan mujahedeen under his command could eject Iraqi forces from Kuwait. The King and other statesmen did not share that belief and so bin Laden's offer was rejected. Saudi Arabia had at that point paid more for weapons through the Al Yamamah contract than anyone had paid for anything in history. Its inability to use those weapons in defence of its territory or its neighbours' indicated to bin Laden and other extremists the political and military impotency of Muslim countries. The impotency and apparent

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[249] Fisk, R. (1993, December). Anti-Soviet Warrior Puts his Army on the Road to Peace . *The Independent* . Quoted in Op. Cit., Hegghammer, T. (2003).
[250] The USSR was labelled as such by bin Laden and others because it had more men under arms, aircraft, tanks, ships and missiles than NATO at the time.

political cowardice of countries with the most advanced weaponry contrasted with the myth of lightly armed mujahedeen destroying a superpower through bravery based on faith. The incident confirmed the apostasy of the House of Saud and all other Muslim regimes that joined the coalition. Bin Laden channelled his obvious disappointment into serving the Muslim *ummah* through self-imposed exile in the Sudan where he helped to build infrastructure and businesses in that impoverished country.

At the time of his offer to use the mujahedeen against Saddam, bin Laden had warned that if the American's were allowed to do so, they would use the pre-text to 'occupy' Saudi Arabia and to extract financial gain. Approximately 3 years after Saddam Hussein's forces were ejected from Iraq, bin Laden's cohort observed that US forces not only remained on Saudi soil but were developing their bases. Those bases and others in the region were being used to enforce stringent UN sanctions against Iraq, which were to lead to the deaths of millions of Iraqi's in the coming years. Saudi Arabia was also experiencing a virtual bankruptcy because it had, in the words of Secretary of State Baker, *"paid for the war, and some*!"[251]   Paying for the war resulted in significant degradation of public services and in increased price rises in Saudi Arabia.[252]   When civic leaders, particularly religious clerics, raised voices of discontent they were imprisoned.[253]

By 1996, the Sudanese government was coming under increasing pressure from the Saudis to hand over bin Laden who had become highly critical and threatening in a number of statements he had made. He sought refuge in Afghanistan with the newly established Islamist government of the Taliban under Mullah Omar. It was from there and as a response to his perception of the Saudi Arabian policy of subordination to

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[251] Saudi Arabia paid the largest single contribution at to war costs at over $ 16.8bn, see: US Department of Defense. (April 1992). *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War, The Final Report to the US Congress.* Washington. Appendix P. These were official figures and do not include favourable contract deals and other commercial benefits that followed the conflict. The Secretary of State's comments made in a BBC documentary some years later indicate additional financial benefits provided by the Saudi regime.

[252] Bin laden describes the economic crisis as follows: "*the financial crisis happened … and now all the people there suffer … merchants found that their contracts were broken. The government owes them 340 billion Saudi Riyals, which … represents 90 per cent of the national income inside the Kingdom. Prices are going up and people have to pay more for electricity, water and fuel. Saudi farmers have not received money since 1992, and those who get grants now receive them on government loans from banks. Education is deteriorating and people have to take their children from government schools and put them in private education which is very expensive.*" Fisk, R. (1996, July 10). Interview with Usama bin Laden. *The Independent* . Quoted in Op. Cit., Hegghammer, T. (2003).

[253] "*After it insulted and jailed the 'ulama' 18 months ago, the Saudi regime lost its legitimacy.*" Usama bin Laden, in Ibid.

Western political influence that bin Laden assembled a small coalition of Islamist extremist groups to co-sign a fatwa declaring war on the West.

Two myths drove the declaration of war against what was then the world's remaining super-power. Bin Laden had observed that the Soviet Union had managed to preserve its compliant regime in Kabul during the war. It was a few years after the collapse of the USSR that the Najibullah regime in Kabul also collapsed. Bin Laden learned from this scenario that it was better to reverse the priorities of attack in Islamist strategy. He advocated attacking the far enemy, the West, first, arguing that the near enemy, the apostate Islamic regimes would automatically fall. It was in this basis that bin Laden created the global Salafi jihad. The idea of the global jihad alone would have been no more than a theoretical possibility if could not be made to appear an achievable reality. That purpose was fulfilled by another myth. That second myth was what could be called the 'Roger Bannister' effect. It was the belief that the mujahedeen had and could destroy super powers through a combination of asymmetric warfare and religious devotion.

These two myths shaped the actions and expectations of Al Qaeda in the late 1990's. Bin Laden believed that just as it had in Vietnam, Beirut and Somalia[254] the US would withdraw whenever it suffered heavy casualties. Consequently, Al Qaeda operatives simultaneously attacked the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. They also attacked the US warship SS Cole. These spectacular and often synchronized attacks culminated in the attacks on New York and Washington on 9/11. The 9/11 attacks revealed bin Laden's flawed understanding of Western democracies' commitment to political violence. In wars of choice, the West is unwilling to pay a high price. However, in wars of necessity, where the homeland is at stake, the West can be unconstrained in resorting to violence. It seems that Al Qaeda's mythical belief in the inevitability of success in jihad is partly based on its mythical belief about Western capacity to absorb casualties in warfare. That mythical belief has so far proven to be false.

War on Terror, Myth of 'Eternal Conflict' and Al Qaeda's Strategic Development

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[254] Bin Laden had witnessed from nearby Sudan the ignominious withdrawal of the US forces from Somalia following the 'Black Hawk Down' incident in which only 29 US servicemen were killed. This served to confirm the myth that a 'jihad' inspired insurgency was bound to succeed as well as the myth that the West lacked the political will to absorb significant casualties. This was probably the single most influential incident in shaping Al Qaeda's subsequent terrorist strategy against the West.

Although the West's policy of intervention rather than withdrawal challenged Al Qaeda's myth about its political commitment in the face of casualties, the subsequent declaration of the 'War on Terror' by the US and the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq confirmed and strengthened the Islamist myth of an eternal conflict between Islam and the West.[255] Bin Laden issued a message to the 'people of Iraq' days before the expected invasion of that country in which he outlined a new strategy for dealing with the West. He proposed 'exhausting' the West's political, military and economic capital primarily through insurgency warfare. This strategy, based on longer-term depletion of will and capability, contrasted with the previously hoped for withdrawal in response to a 'shock and awe' terrorism campaign. Forced by pragmatic necessity, the new strategy had the advantage of placing bin Laden and his cohort in their comfort zone. The Afghan mujahedeen had learned their craft and framed their worldview through being insurgents rather than terrorists. Al Qaeda therefore developed a parasitic approach to the insurgencies in Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Yemen and other countries, framing these essentially local or regional conflicts as part of a global jihad in its propaganda. Collectively these insurgencies serve to progress bin Laden's strategy to exhaust Western capability and resolve through depleting its political, military and economic capital.[256]

The parasitic insurgency strategy has not rendered the tactic of terrorism redundant. Terrorism is the primary means by which Al Qaeda can assert its relevance as an independent entity because it lacks the concentration of followers in any single particular location to provide a viable insurgent force. Terrorism is also critical to its ideological and propaganda campaign because it allows bin Laden's threats such as "*You will not enjoy security in the West until we enjoy in Palestine,*" to continue to echo every time a terror plot on Western soil or against Western interests is revealed. Finally terrorism can and does advance Al Qaeda's contribution to depleting Western political, military and economic capital. For example, Abumutalab's attempt at blowing up an aircraft on Christmas Day 2009 was declared a political success even though the bomb failed to explode and injured only the bomber. Samir Khan, a member of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula pointed out that the incident led to the resignation of the US Director of National Intelligence, a move clearly indicating the heavy political cost of the incident.

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[255] This myth is discussed in other parts of the Thesis.
[256] For a fuller discussion of Al Qaeda's strategic development, see the Author's Chapter in Ashraf, A. (2011). Al Qaeda and the London Olympics. In A. Richards, P. Fussey, & A. Silke (Eds.), *Terrorism and the Olympics* (pp. 32-48). Abingdon, Oxon, UK: Routledge.

Three more 'failed' incidents like this could lead to a Presidential resignation, he declared. Nidal Hasan's shooting of 13 people at Fort Hood on 5 November 2009 is an example of the direct damage that Al Qaeda can inflict on the US forces from time to time. The October 2010 attempt to blow up cargo aircraft by hiding explosives in printer cartridges led to countermeasures estimated to cost in excess of billions of Dollars. According to Al Qaeda the operation cost is just $4,200, which it considered a good return on investment.[257]

Conclusions

Extreme ideologies arise out of social and political crises because crises can create perceptions of injustice and threaten dignity. The resultant humiliation is a major factor in the formulation of reactionary ideologies. Such ideologies must claim a superior form of social and political justice; one that is organic, offers ultimate salvation and is able to inspire faith in ultimate victory. As these claims contradict prevailing truths, they are by definition mythical and, often, fundamental. Religious ideologies employ scriptural justification to frame the new order, to defend against criticism and to provide an ethical framework for political violence.

Western Imperialism created more than a political crisis for Muslim peoples; it provided a theological threat. Revivalist movements emerged to meet that threat and most raised the banner of jihad in response, an idea that in part was triggered by Christian critics of Islam. Almost universal political subjugation to the West was understood theologically as being a punishment for straying from the 'straight path' and the predominant aim of revivalists was to re-establish society on that path. The political crises in the Muslim world coincided with a period of political crisis in the West that saw the emergence of alternative political ideologies, a trend labelled as 'political religions.' Maududi was amongst the first Muslims to contribute to the emerging market of political theories by articulating modern Islamism – the idea that Islam was primarily a political doctrine and was a superior alternative to Western political systems.

Maududi relied on the generally accepted Islamic belief that a people's political success is linked to their adherence to the 'straight path' and to an old and extreme myth that

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[257] Figures provided and claims made in Al Qaida in Arabian Peninsula's English Language Jihad magazine, Inspire, issue three intermittently available on line.

'sovereignty belongs to God.' Combined, these myths made the case for activism against the status quo and for absolutism; that Islamism was the only solution for mankind and alternatives had to be fought. The already politicised idea of jihad provided the ethical justification for political violence. These myths form the basis of all Islamist extremist ideologies, including Al Qaeda's. Al Qaeda's founders had these myths confirmed during the war against the Soviets in Afghanistan where they believe they succeeded by 'exercising power synergistically with God.'

The idea that 'sovereignty belongs to God,' or *hakimiyya,* was nourished by the universality of misrule and repression experienced by Muslims at the hands of their governments during the post colonial phase. These despotic tendencies are a modern phenomenon that contradicts the great stress Islam puts on social justice. Islamist ideologue Sayyid Qutb harnessed the resulting feelings of indignation and humiliation. He linked despotism and 'moderate' Islam to Western influences and presenting Islamism as a mythical panacea.

Islamism in most of its manifestations has exploited the fundamental theological principle of *tawheed*, or absolute monotheism to advocate a totalitarian outlook. The concept binds Islamists from the Salafi tradition with those from the Deobandi and is most clearly evident in the political alliance between Al Qaeda and the Taliban. *Tawheed's* singular conception of God is exploited to advance the myth of a singular political system, observed by the myth of a singular Islamic community (the *ummah*), living under a future mythical singular regime (an Emirate or Caliphate) and abiding by the myth of a singular law (*sharia*). *Tawheed* is also used to contrast the Islamists' myth of a divinely ordained utopia with the evident imperfections of the man-made Western pluralist democratic system.

Of the supporting myths that extremists employ, the most powerful is the myth of 'loyalty and disavowal.' Instead of employing the injunction to promote good and eradicate evil from a particular society, extremists have used the idea to reinforce a Manichean view of the world. They restrict love to those that share their own worldview and encourage hatred for all others. Because it is easier to eradicate bad than to spread good, their ideology stresses the need to fight the evils of 'non-believers' but

offers little detail of a positive future. This myth further encourages separation and conflict and so reinforces the violent mythical version of jihad and apostasy.

Ideological separation was given a geographical dimension through the myth of exclusion of non-believers from the Arabian Peninsula. It was the apparent contradiction of this myth by the stationing of Western forces on Saudi soil during the 1990s that affected bin Laden and drove him to act against the Saudi King by adopting the strategy of the Global Jihad.

Collectively these myths and theological concepts feed into Islamism's grand myth of a sort of theological determinism; through the establishment of a 'pure' political system will emerge the righteous society. This model contrasts with the view of many non-Islamist Muslims who argue that a pure social and political order will only emerge after society develops elevated levels of righteousness. The former relies on political violence to achieve its aims, the latter on peaceful persuasion.

The Iranian revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 marked the establishment of the first theocracy in Islam and an international endorsement of the label of jihad. Both events served to endorse the myth of sovereignty belonging to God and the myth of political success through jihad, increasing Islamists' credibility and self-confidence. Consequently, Abdullah Azzam's introduced a geographical component into the concept of jihad by declaring it a Muslim's duty to recover any land that was once ruled by Muslims. His ideas were believed to have had tacit approval of the Saudi religious establishment and young Saudis like bin Laden were indoctrinated with them at university.

While Al Qaeda's ideology relies mostly on commonplace Islamist myths, its most original and influential myth is that the mujahedeen defeated the world's greatest superpower in Afghanistan. Emboldened by this myth, Al Qaeda developed the idea that it could and will defeat the USA and its Western allies. The Muslim world's impotence in reacting to the invasion of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein, despite the huge amount it spent on weapons, confirmed that bin Laden's myth of defeating a superpower was grounded in faith rather than in temporal political power. Saudi Arabia's considerable contribution to the costs of the war against Saddam and the continuing stationing of

Western forces on Saudi soil further confirmed the Islamist narrative that Muslim regimes were apostate through whom the West exploited Muslim wealth and peoples.

Bin Laden's strategic thinking was highly influenced by the fall of the Soviet's client regime in Kabul just months after the demise of the Soviet Union. He understood that his 'near' enemy (Muslim 'apostate' regimes) could not survive the fall of the 'far' enemy (the West). This strategic approach drove his declaration of war against the west and shaped Al Qaeda's initial terrorist operations designed to coerce the West to disengage from the Muslim world. Its failure and the West's 'War on Terror' provided Al Qaeda with an alternative strategy aimed at exhausting the West through depletion of its political, military and economic capital. This new strategy is mostly conducted through parasitic insurgencies but Al Qaeda needs to use terrorism to keep alive its concept of a global jihad. Continuing military pressure has increased Al Qaeda's dependency upon terror operations carried out by individuals or groups inspired solely by its ideology, placing a greater reliance on its rhetorical ability.

Chapter Four: Rhetoric - Debates, Types, Characteristics and Nature

Al Qaeda's strategic reliance on widespread ideological inspiration through rhetoric invites critical analysis of its written and oral statements. That does not preclude the associated visual and other symbolic actions of the movement. Indeed, the very act of terrorism is rhetorical. Such acts will also be considered but to a lesser extent than verbal rhetoric, on the assumption that action primarily supports articulated positions.

A debate on rhetoric occupies the first section of this Chapter. It briefly considers the arguments surrounding the advantages and disadvantages of the art that emerged since classical times. The paucity of research done on comparative rhetoric is then identified before addressing the current resurgence and development of the subject and the challenges in applying it to the analysis of Al Qaeda's ideology. This section exposes the development of rhetoric as a subject without discussing the theory in any detail. Instead, the aim is to provide sufficient understanding of the rules and features of rhetoric so as to provide a comparative framework within which to analyse Al Qaeda's approach. The second section deals with the types and characteristics of rhetoric and these are mapped onto Al Qaeda's statements to determine what that revels about its ideology. A similar mapping technique is used in the final section, which deals with the nature of rhetoric, its social acceptance and rejection.

The purpose of discussing the art of rhetoric in some detail is to situate Al Qaeda's dialogue within this area of academic study as well as to expose methodologies such as the use of metaphor and implicit meanings which are used in deriving detailed elements of Al Qaeda's ideology in other chapters. The importance of the identity and character of the orator to the effectiveness of rhetoric is such that it is difficult to attribute a rhetorical style to an organisation or to a movement. It will therefore be necessary to concentrate primarily on Al Qaeda's primary ideologue, Osama bin Laden. Ayman al-Zawahiri and others will only be referred to for comparative purposes or when no suitable example can be found in bin Laden's statements. For example, bin Laden was publicly silent between December 2004 and January 2006, with Zawahiri speaking for Al Qaeda during much of this time. However, the rhetorical influences on Osama bin Laden and the resultant development of his particular style will be explored in later chapters.

Classical Rhetoric

Humans are social and hence political animals. To order their affairs, efficiently provide for them and direct their activities, they have always needed to communicate effectively. As they possess free will and as that will often expresses critical judgement and competitive urges, humans have needed to develop the art of persuasion and influence. It is this art or skill that ancient Greek scholars labelled rhetoric. Greek mythology contains some of the earliest reference to skilful oratory in Western civilisation. Heroes in these myths are praised for their talent in inspiring and guiding warriors.[258] The Greek philosophers developed theories about public speaking and began teaching them around the 5th Century BC. Some, such as Sophists, inspired movements that influenced ancient Roman and modern Western arts of discourse. Of these, Aristotle was most detailed in his investigation of and influence over the employment of rhetoric.[259]

The process of application and refinement of rhetoric continued throughout the middle ages with contributions by St Augustine, St Thomas Aquinas, Erasmus and Milton, amongst others. During this period rhetorical techniques were consciously introduced to the propagation of Christianity, initially by St Augustine. Medieval rhetoricians, like their predecessors and successors, used rhetoric as the primary tool for the criticism and advancement of sociological, theological and political ideas. As few could read and the primary form of philosophical communication was verbal, rhetoric was primarily understood as an oral art form.

With the development of the printing press and the spread of literacy, the written form took primacy as the arena for the combat of ideas. The formal recognition of rhetoric as a technique of criticism and persuasion began to disappear although it is just as applicable to the written medium. Aristotle's composition of rhetoric being invention (or research), arrangement (or composition) and style has equal relevance to the written form as they do to the oral. By substituting the writer for the speaker and the audience for the reader, Aristotle's three types of proof in argument namely, ethos (credibility of

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[258] For example Homer's Iliad applauds Achilles for his oratory.

[259] Influential writers on rhetoric include, Isocrates, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero and Quintilian. See for example, Kennedy, G.A. (1994). A New History of Classical Rhetoric. Princeton University Press.

the speaker), pathos (appeal to an audience's emotions) and logos (the use of reasoning) also remain valid.[260]

Current Understandings of Rhetoric

The majority of contemporary books on the topic continue to present theories of ancient rhetoric as having current validity. Barilli's '*Rhetoric'*[261] situates rhetoric as a conduit of politics, art, philosophy and history within the larger history of Western culture. He addresses rhetoric during modernity, especially the relationship between rhetoric and poetry during that period. When dealing with the contemporary revival of rhetoric, Barilli explores the negative bias against rhetoric at the beginning of the last century and identifies topical areas of its resurgence.

The Cross-Cultural Gap

Barilli's claim that rhetoric originated in Ancient Greece is an unjustified limitation widespread in Western analysis that ignores the contributions of Indian, Chinese and Arab philosophers in this area and fails to explore rhetoric in African and Aboriginal cultures. In an increasingly interdependent, globalised world that relies on mass communication, these omissions in academic study may partly explain the continuing lack of understanding between cultures. Rhetoric, "*should be a study of misunderstanding and its remedies,*" according to I.A. Richards[262]. Some authors make great efforts to develop theories addressing contemporary issues such as race, sex and mass media, but any unifying model or even trends in rhetorical development are missing, as is any comprehensive understanding of the relationship between rhetoric and political ideology.

George Kennedy is one of the few to compare rhetoric in different cultures. His study of comparative rhetoric included Native American, Aboriginal Australians, Chinese, Indian, Egyptian, Mesopotamian, and the Aztecs. He broadly came to the conclusion that rhetoric is universal to human cultures and, possibly, also to biological life.[263] Kennedy found evidence in China and India of traditions similar to Greek sophistry during the

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[260] For a fuller explanation see Aristotle. *Aristotle's Rhetoric.* (W. R. Roberts, Trans.) http://www2.iastate.edu/~honeyl/Rhetoric/index.html.
[261] Barilli, R. (1989). *Rhetoric*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.
[262] Foss, K. A., Foss, S. K., & Trapp, R. (2002). *Readings in Contemporary Rhetoric.* Illinois: Waveland Press Inc.
[263] Ibid, p.265

same millennia. Notably, these traditions came into existance as a result of circumstances which included increasingly diverse social settings, political instability, presence of foreigners and radical changes to moral and religious conditions; that is to say, in a society undergoing social and political crises.

The most useful part of Kennedy's study to this Chapter is not the similarities identified but the differences he notes in the use of rhetoric between cultures. He points to Michael J. Fox's assessment that in Egypt it was not "*elaborate displays of oratorical skill*" but "*self restraint typically won the day.*" Fox assesses that Egyptian rhetoric

> "*... does not teach how to formulate arguments because it is not arguments but rather the ethical stance of the speaker that will maintain harmony in the social order, and that is the ultimate goal of Egyptian rhetoric.*"[264]

Similarly, Kennedy notes that while the Aztecs employed a very Greek, *epideictic*[265] style of speech, their approach to persuasion was different. The Aztecs considered ethos rather than supporting proof most compelling in argument.   *"The primary means of persuasion is the authority of the speaker, who is regularly an older individual of high status, wise in the ways of the culture.*"[266] Although the Chinese had developed a highly polished and analogous tradition to Greek rhetoric, rhetorical persuasion was predominantly conducted in a private setting rather than in a public one. This gave prominence to written or conversational rhetoric over public speaking.

The most significant difference between Western and non-Western rhetoric identified by Kennedy is that the former tends to be competitive and the latter, non-competitive. This, Kennedy theorises, arose as a result of a competitive trend in Greek society at the time of the development of the art of rhetoric, which coincided with the Greek love of athletics and physical competition. The consequences he sees as being that:

> "*the Greeks delighted in contentious argument; they often put a relatively low priority on telling the truth if a lie would be more effective; slanderous invective was not out of order in a court of law.*"[267]

On the other hand, "*generally speaking, throughout the non-Western world, rhetoric has been used for the purposes of agreement and conciliation, and emotionalism, except in the*

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[264] Quoted in Op. Cit., Herrick, J.A. (2005). p. 266
[265] A style most appropriate to writing or reading according to Aristotle.
[266] James A. Op. Cit., Lawrence, B. (2007), *Op Cit* p 266
[267] Ibid p 268.

case of lamentation of the dead, is regarded as in poor taste."[268]   These examples of fundamental differences in aims and styles between people's points to a research and theoretical gap in the study of rhetoric, particularly in the contexts of ideological formulation and conflict resolution.

Resurgence and Development

Whilst the popular image of rhetoric suffers from the Socratic criticism of being a shallow and insincere activity, there has been considerable resurgence in its study and development over recent times. Barilli identified the law, politics, ethics and aesthetics as well as in Anglo-American criticism as areas of resurgence. The cause he identifies as being the spread of democracy and the explosion of international commerce. Almost universal suffrage has resulted in unprecedented numbers of people becoming involved in debating policies at local, regional and national level, requiring the use of the full range of rhetorical techniques, at least in democratic countries. Similarly, international commerce and widespread use of the media has involved the use of rhetoric as a tool of persuasion in marketing.

Commercial marketing, political propaganda and public relations have greatly increased the employment of rhetoric in society. They have in turn introduced sciences such as psychology to considerably develop the rhetorical arts.   However, the labels of marketing, propaganda and public relations have had the effect of divorcing these fields from the general study of rhetoric, which tends to be identified with the academic and political arenas. In these arenas some notable and original contributions have made by, inter alia, Stephen Toulmin,[269] Quentin Skinner[270] and Robert Hariman.[271] Both Toulmin and Skinner were influenced by Wittgenstein's ideas about the role and use of language in philosophical thought.   Toulmin delved deeply into the nature and features of argument construction. His theories on argumentation and reasoning methodologies are discussed in the next chapter.   Hariman is probably unique in exploring the relationship between rhetoric and political style. Application of his rhetorical analysis techniques to determining Al Qaeda's political style is also explored in a subsequent chapter.

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[268] Ibid
[269] Op. Cit., Toulmin, S. (1958).
[270] Palonen, K. (2003). *Quentin Skinner: History, Politics, Rhetoric.* Cambridge: Polity.
[271] Hariman, R. (1995). *Political Style.* London: University of Chicago Press Ltd.

Skinner explored the link between language and political thought in a historical and cultural context. Skinner postulated that political writing was best analysed by extracting from it embedded "speech acts". The speech act idea is one that Skinner developed from Wittgenstein, J L Austin and others, and requires going beyond analysing the meaning of words to asking what the author or speaker was doing by choosing those words.[272] Speakers' or writers' intentions are linked to their beliefs and motivations according to Skinner but he concedes that the theory does not suggest that the intentions of authors are the "*sole or even the best guide*"[273] for analysing their texts or speech. Rather, to understand the full meaning of text then the intention behind the choice of language as well the meaning of the words it comprises need also be considered. Those intentions need to be determined from sources such as belief and motivation, which may not be apparent through the text. This too will be assumed in the analysis of Al Qaeda's rhetoric and ideology.

Although not necessarily an original idea, Skinner has championed the concept that political texts cannot be fully understood outside of their ideological inheritance and outside of the context in which they were written. That is to say political ideology has to be understood in relation to its intellectual history and its cultural context. Skinner's ideas were partly a reaction to a pervading Marxist influence in the social and political sciences during his early years as an academic. His ideas on author's intent, discussed above, have parallels with the Marx's famous question: 'Whose interest is served by perceiving the meaning of history always in the present?' But Skinner does not accept the Marxist view of historical analysis, fashionable during the mid twentieth centaury, which assumed that belief and principles were merely offered as justifications for action and so played no significant role in driving or explaining human behaviour. Consequently, intellectual history was considered to be of little relevance. Similarly, the intellectual vogue of the time tended to downplay the influence of the author's personality or style of text in favour of concentrating on the discourse (views mainly postulated by Barth and Foucalt). Skinner on the other hand, wanted to:

> *"retain the notion of authorial intentionality to help account for processes of conceptual change. It is sometimes possible to identify moments in the history of philosophy when a new theme emerges, or a new way of thinking about an established concept or argument is introduced. It is hard to write*

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[272] Skinner, Q. (2002). *Visions of politics* . Cambridge University Press. P.103-120.
[273] Ibid p.110.

satisfactory history unless we are willing to acknowledge that individual authors may sometimes stand behind such changes, and indeed may serve to explain them."[274]

Skinner's theory of intellectual history applied to ideological analysis is used throughout this thesis. It underpinned the methodology of the chapter on Crises Environment where the evolution of political and theological ideas during periods of acute political and social crises is explored. His idea of '*authorial intentionality*' is accepted as valid and is used to analyse the rhetoric of Al Qaeda's current ideologues as well as prominent Islamist ideologues from which Al Qaeda borrows components of its ideology.

Application to Al Qaeda

Although Al Qaeda has been making public statements since the early 1990's they have been virtually ignored by the public and apparently also by Western governments. According to jihadist expert Thomas Hegghammer,

> "*Bin Laden has been screaming for attention, always declaring his intentions before putting them into practice. Yet it was not until 2005 that these declarations were made available to a broader Western public with the publication of Messages to the World, a reader of Bin Laden's texts edited by Bruce Lawrence.*"[275]

In the introduction to his Book, Bruce Lawrence uniquely published a brief assessment of Al Qaeda's rhetoric.[276] Analysis of poetry contained in Al Qaeda's Statements is an even more neglected area of study. Flag Miller is alone in attempting to critique and contextualise Al Qaeda's poetry. He has begun to provide some profound insights into this aspect of Al Qaeda's rhetoric. Unfortunately, his work is not yet fully published and so it is briefly referenced via unpublished comments in another chapter. Miller's previous work on a particular form of Yemeni poetry demonstrated the illuminating power of poetic analysis in linking social behaviours, values and politics by revealing "*the centrality of anthropology and the humanities to studies of liberal political formation.*"[277] Taken collectively, the failure to accept, analyse and respond to these forms of rhetoric is arguably a factor in the escalation rather than abatement of the conflict between Al Qaeda and the West over the last decade.

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[274] Millum, D. (2008, April 18). *Interview with Professor Quentin Skinner*. Retrieved September 1, 2009 from Making History: http://www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/interviews/Skinner_Quentin.html.
[275] Hegghammer, T. (2008, April 4). Jihadi Studies. *Times Literary Survey*.
[276] Op. Cit., Lawrence, B. (2005).
[277] Miller, F. (n.d.). The Moral Resonance of Arab Media: Audiocassette Poetry and Culture in Yemen, Harvard Middle East Monographs, 38. *Harvard Middle East Monographs* (38), p. 456.

Types and Characteristics of Rhetoric

Rhetorical Types

In classical theory at least, there are three types of rhetoric. It is worth considering their relevance in the context of this Chapter. Judicial (or forensic) rhetoric is, as the name implies, employed in arguing a legal case. The "*speaker's ultimate concern is with justice, and his listeners are required to reach a verdict about certain events*,"[278] the emphasis is on provision of proof and examination of evidence. Classical theorists such as Aristotle and Quintilian have concentrated most on this aspect of rhetoric, presumably because judicial arguments are central to organising affairs amongst people in an ethically justifiable manner.

Al Qaeda's Judicial Rhetoric

Al Qaeda has framed the majority of its narrative of grievances in legal terms. It sees the plight of Muslims as resulting from years of oppression and inequity and so much of its rhetoric is framed as a case based on evidence of injustices against Muslims as well as a case justifying violent retaliatory action against the alleged perpetrators of these crimes. A legal rhetorical style is also crucial in giving Al Qaeda a veneer of authority as if it were a sovereign state or an established caliphate. Consequently, judicial rhetoric predominates Al Qaeda's discourse.

In response to accusations that he is a terrorist, bin Laden cites examples of alleged Western terrorism as evidence that the West, more than he, stands accused of terrorism. Elsewhere he freely accepts that he has practised terror. However, his argument is that his terrorism is in response to the terrorism of the West and it is just retribution for what Muslims have suffered, albeit he cannot match the numbers killed by Western acts of terrorism.

> *"…The evidence overwhelmingly shows America and Israel killing the weaker men, women, and children in the Muslim world and elsewhere. A few examples of this are the recent Qana massacre in Lebanon, and the death of more than 600,000 Iraqi children because of a shortage of food and medicine which resulted from the boycott and sanctions, also, their withholding of arms from the Muslims of Bosnia Herzegovina, leaving them prey to the Christian Serbians who massacred and raped in a manner not seen in contemporary history. Nor should one forget the deliberate,*

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[278] Op. Cit., Dixon, P. (1971). p 22.

premeditated dropping of the H Bombs on cities with their entire populations of children, elderly and women, as was the case with Hiroshima and Nagasaki. ..."[279]

Other statements allege atrocities covering almost 200 years which include bombardment and gassing of Iraqi villages by Winston Churchill in the 1920s, the 1930s crushing of the Palestinian uprising and French atrocities in Algeria during the 1950s and 1960s. Whilst some of his examples may be contentious or exaggerated, they are convincing enough for Bruce Lawrence to admit that "*he is right about the staggering disproportion in the numbers of those killed on both sides.*" The evidence presented allows bin Laden to claim, "*because you have killed, we must kill. Your innocents are not less innocent than ours.*" Lawrence finds this statement less chilling than Madeleine Albright's assertion that the deaths of half a million Iraqi children were "*worth it.*" [280] It is the forthright challenge to such apparent callus indifference of Western leaders to atrocities against Muslims, which Lawrence explains as being the cause of the trust and admirations that bin Laden's rhetoric enjoys in the Muslim world.

Al Qaeda also has to counter the judicial discourse of its adversaries where that discourse clashes with its political position. For example, the Saudi regime has tended to seek religious backing for political decisions such as its invitation to the USA in 1991 to remove Iraqi forces from Kuwait. That backing invariably came in the form of juridical decree (*fatwa*) from the Country's senior religious scholars. Bin Laden has criticised these fatwa's either individually or collectively. His most effective attack is to point out that these religious leaders are in the pay of their masters and so their judgements reflect the regime's political interests rather than Islamic doctrine and the interest of Muslims. He claims that whenever Muslim regimes blatantly act in the interest of the West they invariably seek "*a fatwa from their religious organisation.*" The role of the Saudi religious organisation he describes as being prejudicial to the interest of Muslims "*the most ominous of roles, ... the harm which eventuated from their efforts is no different from the role of the most ardent enemies of the nation.*"[281] Bin Laden is not so much attacking the legality of the Saudi argument but attacking the regime's authority to make it.

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[279] Laden, O. B. (1996, October/November). The New Powder Keg in the Middle East. *Nida'ul Islam* (15).
[280] Quoted Op. Cit., Lawrence, B. p. xix.
[281] Ibid

Al Qaeda's Deliberative Rhetoric

Deliberative rhetoric is the style dedicated to social and political discourse in which the audience has to be persuaded for or against a course of action or policy. This is a significant part of Osama bin Laden's rhetoric as he is primarily persuading the *ummah* to take up arms against both the corruption of their governments and the manipulation of Western powers. Although the issue is addressed elsewhere in a judicial style, a deliberative approach is used when an appeal is primarily to emotion rather than to reason. A strong example is found in bin Laden's audio statement of April 2007 'A Message to all the *Tawagheet* (The people of belief)' in which he appeals to Saudi elites to support Al Qaeda against their governments' actions. The appeal in this message is primarily for the audience to believe the situation is grave and that it needs urgent action:

> *"...My message to the respected scholars of truth, prominent people in key leadership positions and merchants is this: You must realise the seriousness of the situation before it is too late. Events are happening and matters are changing at an incredible speed towards an explosion. So do your best to defuse the problem. Let it be known that the mujahideen in the land of the two holy mosques have not yet started the fight against the government. If they start, they will undoubtedly begin with the head of the Kufr, the rulers of Riyadh ..."*[282]

Here an appeal to recognize the seriousness and urgency of the crisis are clearly stated, as are the consequences of failure to act: the inevitability of an "*explosion*". Fear and patriotism are the predominant emotions being exploited in this instance. This example is typical of Al Qaeda's deliberative rhetoric directed at an 'intra-Muslim' dialogue in support of an 'awakening' of the Muslim masses, a theme that bin Laden has progressively introduced in his statements. In April 2003 he urged Muslims to support jihad with their bodies and wealth, especially Muslim women. The concept of an 'awoken *ummah'* has parallels with the Marxist idea of raising the consciousness of the proletariat. It is communicated by rhetoric that highlights grievances, identifies the cause as being the secularisation of Islamic governments and the anti-Islamic pollicises of the West and urges Muslims to 'rise up' against America and its allies, as a solution.

A contingent issue to the concept of awakening is the growing need for unity of rebellion especially in Iraq and Afghanistan, an aspect in which Al Qaeda has played a somewhat

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[282] Osama bin Laden *A message to all the Tawagheet* Apr 07.

contradictory role, having endorsed the violently anti-Shia stance of Zarqawi in Iraq between 2004 and 2007. This may explain why Ayman al Zawahiri addressed the increasingly fractionalised insurgent elements in Iraq in his 'The Advice of one Concerned' by adopting a deliberately humble manner to avoid patronising and by emphasising brotherhood to encourage unity:

> *"...I believe it is incumbent on my beloved brothers in Iraq to take note of a number of things. I don't believe they are unaware of these things –in fact they may appreciate them better than me- but I hope they will open their hearts to my words and accept the advice of a caring and concerned brother. The first thing which our beloved brothers in Iraq must realise is the critical nature of unity, and that it is the gateway to victory and a matter which is not open to delay or procrastination..."*[283]

In his open letter to Saudi Arabia's King Fahd, bin Laden condemns at length the King's pro Western policies, using the emotion of humiliation as a primary criticism. The appeal to the pride of Saudi citizens is apparent, as is the attack on the regime's limited sovereignty.

> *"And on top of all, there is the Palestinian cause, the mother of all causes. You have blessed the march toward <u>humiliation</u>, normalization and bewilderment, and continued the farce of 'peace' which in fact is forced submission...*
>
> *Was not US President Clinton the one who, upon visiting the country, refused to call on you in Riyadh and insisted that you come to him in <u>humiliation</u>, at the US bases in Hafr al-Batin? The US president underscored two points:*
>
> *-To emphasize that his visit was primarily to see his stationed troops at those bases.*
>
> *-To teach you a lesson of <u>humiliation</u> and you door to failure so that you understand that he is your true guardian, even inside your kingdom which in all truthfulness is a US state, subject to US jurisdiction."*[284]

The relative paucity of deliberative rhetoric aimed at the West may be an indication of Al Qaeda's belief that Western government opinion cannot be directly swayed by verbal or symbolic rhetoric. This view was probably influenced by the negative Western public opinion of Al Qaeda following the 9/11 attacks.

Employment of Adam Gadahn, an American convert to Islamism as a spokesman for Al Qaeda may have partly been an attempt to deal with the negative Western perception.

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[283] Ayman al Zawahiri *The Advice of one concerned* Jul 07.
[284] Laden, O. b. (1995, August 3). Open Letter to King Fahd of Saudi Arabia. FFI/RAPPORT-2002/01393 .

Since his first video in October 2004 Gadahn has been used to speak to the United States audience in its own vernacular. More recently, Gadahn's Jewish ancestry and his anti-Zionist views have been exploited in an attempt to give Al Qaeda greater resonance amongst the Palestinians[285] - another audience with whom Al Qaeda has failed to make a significant impact. Gadahn declares "*Your speaker has Jews in his ancestry, the last of whom was his grandfather*." He describes his grandfather as a "*zealous supporter of the usurper entity, and a prominent member of a number of Zionist hate organizations*" and claims that "*he used to repeat to me what he claimed are the virtues of this entity and encouraged me to visit [Israel]*." Gadahn declined the offer because he could not condone "*the Jews' rape of Muslim Palestine*."[286] As such Gadahn is deployed both to exploit his cultural skills to speak to Americans and his ancestry to establish an empathetic link with the Palestinians.

After 9/11 Al Qaeda appeared to accept that it may be almost impossible to directly impact western government policy and so its efforts attempted to cause sufficient disenchantment amongst western public opinion to create pressure for a change of policy. A sub-strategy appeared to target the poor and black communities in an attempt to drive a wedge between various strata of US society. In a statement constructed to target black Americans, Zawahiri simultaneously exploits the USA's racist history and its current socio-economic divisions:

> *"And I tell the soldier of colour in the American army that the racist Crusader regime kidnapped your ancestors to exploit them in developing their resources, and today it is using you for the same purpose, after they altered the look of the shackles and changed the type of chains and try to make you believe that you are fighting for democracy and the American dream…And after you achieve for them what they want, they will throw you out into the street like an old shoe."[287]*

Another attempt within the same statement targets the mostly working class combat veterans. Inadequacies in the health care for combat veterans had become a hot topic of political debate in the USA. Zawahiri exploits this knowledge by relating a story he "*heard on the BBC in English this past March 17 [2007] about thousands of discharged wounded soldiers who are now homeless*." Zawahiri claimed one such soldier, who had served in the Army for 14 years, two of which were in Iraq, was wounded and

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[285] Adam Gadahn video statement released 14 Jun 09.
[286] Ibid.
[287] Ayman al Zawahiri Video Statement, 5 May 07.

discharged. He was subsequently evicted from his house and now "*sleeps in his grandmother's car on the street*" because he only gets a monthly pension of $400. There has been no significant indication of success in this strategy and it is likely that Al Qaeda alienated some black Muslims because of its exploitation of racist politics. However, these and other examples betray a skilful attempt at influencing social and political discourse through deliberative rhetoric.

Al Qaeda's Demonstrative Rhetoric

Demonstrative rhetoric is the style most often used at public ceremonies and rituals, to mainly praise or denounce gods and men. The audience in this case is not expected to make up its mind or act on a matter; it is merely a "*spectator or critic of the orator's skill*."[288] The need for Al Qaeda's leadership to remain hidden has precluded the public rallies and ceremonies much beloved of political leaders, especially revolutionary ideologues. Its praise of divinity and men is restricted to its video and audio statements. Praising Allah and the Prophet are common introductory and concluding components of public addresses in Islamic tradition, even in contemporary speeches dealing with non-religious topics.   Al Qaeda spokesmen make every effort to ensure that their communiqués are extravagantly garnished with such religious praise not just to conform to tradition but also to re-enforce their claim to be acting for Islam and in accordance with God's will.

Individuals and groups achieving significant success or martyrdom are honoured with prayers for a lofty place in paradise but their achievements are marked primarily to encourage emulation. In September 2002 bin Laden combined praise for the 9/11 hijackers with a subtle appeal for emulation by saying: "*...Those great men [the hijackers] entrenched faith in the hearts of the believers..."*[289] As this example shows, with its simultaneous appeal to "the hearts" and religion, Al Qaeda rarely, if ever, uses rhetoric in a purely demonstrative style but combines it with deliberative and even judicial styles to maximise its impact and benefit. In another example bin Laden offers his own eulogy as:

"a martyr,

dwelling in a high mountain pass

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[288]Op. Cit., Dixon, P. (1971). p. 23.

[289] Laden, O. b. (2002, September 11). *Middle East.* Retrieved August 23, 2008 from BBC News: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/low/world/middle_east/2248894.stm

among a band of knights who,
united in devotion to God,
descend to face armies."[290]

Bin Laden is at pains to be seen to be living and behaving as a humble servant of his faith. Bruce Lawrence predicted that he will die in relative obscurity because of the uncompromising commitment to his mission. But he sees an irony in that "*future Muslim knights or warriors, will risk their lives or give their lives for the cause of jihad,*"[291] as defined by bin Laden. For bin Laden the emulation of future jihadis will not be Ironic. This demonstrative self-praise is uncharacteristic for a man of his humility. The primary purpose of this autobiographical couplet was to be seen as a righteous exemplar; to incite and inspire others to fight and die like him, as a martyr, where the transient self is denied in service of a greater and immortal cause.

Characteristics of Rhetoric

Rhetoric has three features: Message, style and credibility. Herrick amplifies these into six distinguishing characteristics; planning, audience engagement, motivation, inter-activeness, persuasion and addressing contingent issues. How these characteristics feature in Al Qaeda's rhetoric will be briefly discussed below with the exception of audience engagement and contingent issues which are explored in more detail in another chapter.

Planned Rhetoric

Effective rhetors plan their discourse on the basis of what message they want to convey, research the necessary material, construct arguments, arrange these for best effect and choose a style of delivery. The planning process is rarely apparent to the audience. It can only be inferred from the rhetoric itself. This is particularly true for Al Qaeda where the timing, message content and delivery methodology can give clues to the planning and aim of the message.

Al Qaeda's rhetoric is often symbiotic with action. The actions taken are part of a strategy, which is alluded to, explained and published in the group's rhetoric. Just as

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[290] Lawrence, B. (2007, November 13). *The Making of an Info Age Anti-Hero,*. Retrieved June 15, 2008 from UCLA International: www.international.ucla.edu/cms/files/Bruce-Lawrence.pdf.
[291] Ibid.

terrorist 'strikes' are planned, so are the statements, which follow the attacks. For example, the attacks on the Madrid transport network in 2004[292] was clearly planned to influence the Spanish election results. This pre-planning is evident in the statement that claims the attack, the purpose being to punish the Spanish government and people for their support of US policies and action in Iraq:

> *"...We declare our responsibility for the attacks in Madrid, exactly two and a half years after the attacks on New York and Washington. It is a response to your collaboration with the criminals Bush and his allies..."*[293]

The statement was simple, researched and direct. Spanish public opinion was running against the war, the main opposition party in the elections was using an anti-war platform and Al Qaeda regarded Spain as the 'weakest link' in the Coalition at that time. Spanish public opinion was clearly against the war. In February 2003, thousands massed against the war in Madrid. Mass protests against government pro-war policy were also held on 15 March 2003 with 820,000 in attendance across Milan, Madrid and Barcelona.[294] Al Qaeda sympathisers had effectively judged where their actions and rhetoric would have most effect and acted on it with planned violence and a simple argument.[295] Prior planning in rhetoric was also evident in Bin Laden's address to the US during the run up to the Presidential elections in October 2004. Here he seeks to influence the US electorate by issuing a timely reminder of the voting scandals of the last election:

> *"...Bush senior deemed it appropriate to assign his sons to states. He also did not forget to convey the [election] rigging experience from the leaders of the [Arab] region to Florida to benefit from it at critical times..."*

He goes on to give the example of one of the US President's notable perceived failings during his Presidency, his initial inaction to the 9/11 attacks. Almost certainly influenced by a US political satirist, Michael Moore's film '9/11', he says:

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[292] Whilst there is no evidence of involvement of senior Al Qaeda figures like bin Laden in the planning of these attacks, a group calling itself Al Qaeda in Europe claimed responsibility.
[293] Abu Dujan al-Afghani, *Al Qaeda in Europe* 14 Mar 04.
[294] Centenares de miles de manifestantes contra la guerra de IrakYahoo News (Spanish) 15 Mar 03.
[295] It may be argued that it was not the terror of the bombings, which led to the downfall of the Spanish Government but the fact that the Government attempted to mislead the country into believing that ETA was to blame for the attacks. However, the bombings caused the political shock and confusion that resulted in the Government's high-risk miscalculation.

"…This is because it seemed to him that being preoccupied with the little child's talk about the goat and its butting was more important than being preoccupied with the planes and their ramming into the towers…"[296]

This was a calculated statement issued at a politically sensitive time, indicating research, planning and stylistic decisions (the linguistic link between goat, butting, ramming and aircraft) aimed at achieving a political effect.

Motives and Rhetoric

Rhetoric is designed to achieve certain goals. These goals reflect the motives of the rhetoric and are accomplished by aligning his "*own motives with an audience's commitments*". These motives are often deliberately disguised to prevent discovery, or softened to fit in with custom or protocol. Rhetoric should rarely be accepted at face value and this is especially the case when it comes to determining motives, where a critical and sceptical approach is prudent. President Dwight Eisenhower used his "Atoms for Peace" speech of 1953 to send out a series of warnings to the Soviet Union. These warnings were disguised in the text of what was presented as a dispassionate report on nuclear proliferation. For example, one sentence read "*our earlier start has permitted us to accumulate what is today a great quantitative advantage.*" Martin Medhurst describes this as the *explicit* argument but points out that the *implicit* argument is in fact: "*you may have enough nuclear devices to hurt us, but we have a lot more and can outlast you in any nuclear exchange.*"[297]

Al Qaeda attempts to be forthright when delivering its message. Partly, this is born out of its desire to be seen as ethically and ideologically superior. Partly, this is evidence of the central role that rhetoric plays in its political strategy. However, when dealing with divisive issues within the Islamic world some of Al Qaeda's rhetoric is implicit. This is in order that it can sanction a stance, which, if stated explicitly, could be construed as spreading discord or being critical of fellow jihadists. One such issue is the Hamas leadership of Gaza. On the surface Al Qaeda needs to maintain a nonaggressive stance towards a fellow Jihadi group, at the same time it needs to undermine Hamas' policy of a local jihad, which tends to undermine Al Qaeda's notion of a global Jihad with the Palestinian cause at its heart. Ayman al Zawahiri's response in a structured interview to

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[296] Osama bin Laden Statement Oct 04.
[297] Medhurst, M. J., et al. (1997). *Cold War Rhetoric*. Michigan State University Press. p 36.

the question, '*And what do you ask of the mujahid that belongs to one of the organisations whose leadership has become involved in endorsing the accords of surrender?*' is indirect in its harsh criticism of Hamas and in its call for rebellion within its ranks:

> "*… I ask him to work with his mujahid brothers to reform their organisation and direct it to endorse the rule of Shari'ah, take the path of jihad and resistance and hold onto the lands of Islam. And if they don't succeed they must know that they are slaves of Allah and not slaves of any organisation, movement or group…*"

The explicit statement is not critical of Hamas or Palestinians. However, the implicit meaning is that Hamas is straying from the 'true Islamic' conditions listed by Zawahiri and so Hamas members should either convert Hamas to Al Qaeda's ideology or reject it.

Interactive Rhetoric

Rhetoric is an interactive process between the rhetor and the audience. It is interactive both in terms of dialogue and action. Rhetoric can be a response to events but it can also invite a response to itself. Al Qaeda has engaged in what may be one of the most interactive, fast-paced and dramatic rhetorical discourses with its opponents in the history of ideological movements. It responded to perceived exploitation and subservience of Muslim peoples by issuing *fatwas* in the mid '90s and, when it did not receive the expected response, it escalated the conflict by changing the situation through militant actions, such as the one on 9/11.

On 22 February 1998, Osama bin Laden and leaders of four other militant movements issued a fatwa calling on Muslims '*to kill Americans and their allies - civilian and military.*'[298] The proclamation was significant in being one of the first *fatwas* to enjoin Muslims to kill civilians. Magnus Ranstorp assessed that the *fatwa* was precipitated by the continuing US led confrontation with Iraq and the death and suffering resulting from UN-imposed sanctions.[299] He saw the fatwa as indicative of "*Bin Laden's general political astuteness and awareness of local, regional, and global issues,*" and as a means of waging psychological warfare against his opponents rather than as a warning of actual attacks. Ranstorp, like many commentators at the time, found it difficult to regard the fatwa as credible. Bin Laden, he pointed out, selectively quotes verses from the Quran and from

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[298] Smyth, F. (1998, October). Culture Clash. *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 25.
[299] Interpreting the Broader Context and Meaning of Bin-Laden's Fatwa. (1998). *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, *21*, 322.

Muslim history and displays an ignorance of religious knowledge when he "*calls for the killing of civilians, an act strictly prohibited by Islamic law and reinforced by scholars.*"[300] Ranstorp's assessment that bin Laden was unlikely to command a suitable response because "*he lacks formal training or scholarship,*" correctly identified bin Laden's theological limitations. However, Ranstorp did not account for Al Qaeda's latent formidable terror capability. Just four months later, the twin embassy bombings occurred in East Africa, as well as a series of other attacks, culminating in the 9/11 attacks on US soil three years after the fatwa. Throughout that time, Al Qaeda's rhetorical statements continued to be supplemented with deeds as they have been since, in an attempt to maintain the violent dialogue of words and deeds with the West and its perceived compliant Muslim regimes.

Following the US invasion of Afghanistan and subsequent actions under the War on Terror, Al Qaeda embarked on a discourse with its audience aimed at assuring them that it had drawn the Americans into battle and was now very much, 'fighting the war' on behalf of all Islam:

> *"...I say that the battle isn't between the al Qaeda organisation and the global crusaders. Rather the battle is between- The people of Islam- and the global crusaders. And that organisation, with the grace of God, used to work with our Afghan mujahideen brothers, and people used to ask us: 'How will you defeat the Soviet empire?' And at that time the Soviet empire was a mighty power that scared the whole world - NATO used to shake in fear in front of the Soviet Empire. So where now is that strong force that God sent us and our mujahideen brothers?..."*[301]

Here Osama bin Laden references history to draw a parallel between the actions of the United States in Afghanistan and those of the Soviet army in the 1980s. The impression he seeks to create, just days before the expected invasion of Afghanistan by the US led coalition in 2001, was that the outcome will be the same – that the USA will also be defeated in Afghanistan.

Al Qaeda's ability to interpret and provide responses to unfolding events is noteworthy. For example, the knighting of Salman Rushdie by the Queen received special attention by Al Qaeda in 2007. Al Qaeda's message was explicit in its reading of the situation and its suggestion of a reaction:

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[300] Ibid p324

[301] Osama bin Laden 21 Oct 01. Quoted in Op. Cit., Lawrence, B. (2005). p.108

"…The Queen of England has honoured Salman Rushdie by giving him the title of a knight, because he has insulted the Prophet peace be upon him…. It is telling Muslims: If you picture that you are defeating us and forcing us to leave Iraq and Afghanistan, then we curse your Prophet and his family and we consider who[sic] commit that action a hero of ours…In terms of the Islamic Nation I say, The least we have to do regarding Britain is to Boycott their products, if we have an ounce of religion or honour left…"[302]

By confronting each other's weaknesses, interactive rhetoric can drive a change in the ideology of at least one of the parties in a dialogue. Al Qaeda was forced to make a subtle change in its justification for killing Muslim civilians following the November 2005 bombings in three hotels in Amman, Jordan, that resulted in the deaths of 60 mostly Muslim civilians attending a wedding party. The bombings were instigated by Al Qaeda's leader in Iraq, Zarqawi, who claimed that he targeted the hotels because they were used by Western and Israeli intelligence personnel. The only known intelligence related casualty was the Palestinian head of intelligence for the West Bank. The resulting furore forced Zarqawi to justify his actions on the basis of a somewhat obscure historical concept of *tatarrus,*[303] which is claimed to permit the sacrifice of Muslim non-combatants being used as a human shield by an enemy. The Jordanian government responded with a coordinated ideological counter attack. It held a summit conference of the Islamic Council organisation the result of which was a statement by senior religious scholars that the concept of *tatarrus* was not allowed, even in times of war.[304]

Ayman al-Zawahiri also felt obliged to respond. In a statement in March 2007 he attempted to challenge the premise of the allegations by declaring that Al Qaeda did not kill innocents but went on to advise fellow extremists to apply *tatarrus* judicially. In the four years following that statement, very few Al Qaeda attacks have taken place in the Middle East, with the exception of the Iraqi insurgency, that have resulted in the deaths of any significant number of civilians.

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[302] Zawahiri. A. 'Hateful Britain and its Indian slaves' – As Sahab productions Jul 07.

[303] The concept of *tatarrus* is attributed to the classical theologian Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328). Who apparently argued that it was permissible to attack an enemy who may be using Muslim captives as human shields even if there was a risk of these captives being killed in the process. Al Qaida and others, to justify terrorist attacks that result primarily in civilian casualties, have adopted this highly specific ruling intended for conventional battlefield encounters.

[304] Minzili, Y. The Jordanian Regime Fights the War of Ideas. *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology* , *5*, 61.

The pressure on Al Qaeda's employment of the concept of *tatarrus* has continued. Around December 2007, Sayyid Imama Sharif (aka Dr Fadl)[305] issued a book recanting his earlier thoughts on jihadi ideology. He specifically forbid the interpretation of *tatarrus* to allow the killing of innocent Muslims. Zawahiri issued a 200-page book two months later to defend against Dr Fadl's charges. In April 2008, Abu Yahya al-Libi, a recognised scholar amongst Al Qaeda's senior ranks, wrote an essay expressing concern that accusations of unjustified application of *tatarrus* could have a negative impact on its image. These ideological attacks have not only constrained Al Qaeda's target selection for terrorist attacks but have also weakened its rhetorical attacks on competitors. Zawahiri sought to capitalise on Hamas' participation in the Palestinian elections in January 2006, by saying:

> *"The leadership of the Hamas movement has trampled on the rights of the Muslim ummah [community] by accepting what it calls - in a mockery of the intelligence and feelings of the Muslims - respect for international accords. It is with regret that I confront the Muslim ummah with the truth, and tell it: my condolences to you over the loss of the leadership of Hamas, for it has sunk in the swamp of surrender"[306]*

Hamas asserted in a statement issued on the same night that, as Al Qaeda had used indiscriminate and unjustifiable violence against innocents, it was not in a position to pass moral judgment on Hamas:

> *"The [Muslim] people loved al-Qa'ida because it declared war on the American enemy who supports the occupation of Palestine and is the occupier of Iraq and Afghanistan; however this love was taken out of people's chest when they hit the innocent. The victims of the Amman wedding and their families, of who we see and console them even today, are proof of the blind use of weapons which tainted al-Zawahiri and his group."[307]*

Both groups directed their arguments at Muslim, mainly Arab, public opinion. Al Qaeda's case suffered because of its erstwhile-relaxed approach to Muslim civilian casualties in the Arab world. Rhetorical attacks forced it to exercise subsequent restraint in targeting areas where Arab civilians are likely to be casualties.

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[305] Former ideological mentor to Ayman Zawahiri. The two men fell out over a book that Dr Fadl claims he drafted and which Zawahiri published under his own name.
[306] Quoted in the Statement of Cragin, K. (2007). *Understanding Terrorist Ideology: Before the Select Committee on Intelligence. United States Senate.* Santa Monica: RAND.
[307] Ibid.

Al Qaeda purports to set the agenda for certain world event. In this way it can provoke responses from its enemies that appear to confirm its explanations of the world order as well as to justify its arguments for aggression against it. After the US invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, Al Qaeda was able to deliver the argument that even these actions were part of its plan to target America and its allies and to highlight the hypocrisy with which they rule:

> *"...The continued attacks against the American system have finally pulled it into the arena of Jihad. Once in the arena of war it [America] will start feeling its own losses, then it will start paying the price for its support of Israel and its agents in our own countries..."*

> *"...Another benefit of the Islamic resistance is how the campaign of the American crusaders has exposed the emptiness of American values. All of the claims of 'Freedom of thought' 'Freedom of speech', human rights, justice and equality, collapsed in front of all in the face of the Islamic resistance..."*[308]

Al Qaeda's earlier *fatwas* were followed by commentary on their own actions, which is an easier discourse to plan and deliver as it was able to influence which events would transpire and how. However, as the conflict has run its course, it has, in several cases, outstripped Al Qaeda's core ideologues' ability to control or comment on it. The invasion of Lebanon by Israeli Defence Forces in 2006 is an example of an event Al Qaeda would have had little prior planning for, but would have had to comment on, in order to assume some media 'ownership' of the issue. Zawahiri rushed out the following statement in the early days of the conflict:

> *"...The shells that tear apart the bodies of Muslims in Gaza and Lebanon are not purely Israeli, rather they come from and are financed by all countries of the crusader alliance..."*[309]

The statement succeeded in linking the regional crisis in Lebanon to Al Qaeda's views of a global conflict between Muslims and the West but it failed to specify what Al Qaeda could or would do to support the Lebanese and the Palestinians. It was also unclear whether Al Qaeda was referring to the Shia as fellow Muslims or not, causing confusion in their target audience. Consequently the response was not universally well received amongst Al Qaeda's supporters on the Internet as the wording was vague and seemed to contradict Al Qaeda's previously expressed anti-Shia sentiments.

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[308] 'Afghanistan one year on' As Sahab productions 2002
[309] Ayman al Zawahiri Statement July 2006

Indeed, one noticeable weakness in Al Qaeda's rhetoric is that it is a dialogue set in an interactive and evolutionary political environment, which is often outside its control. Certainly the two biggest errors to date are its comments on the Israel-Lebanon conflict and remarks on the election of Hamas in Palestine. The wider community of extremist Muslims generally support much of what is said, or attempt to interpret statements for best effect. However these last two examples could not be suitably interpreted and left many, especially online extremists, feeling a lack of rhetorical direction. On the other hand, where Al Qaeda has dictated events, actions such as 9/11 and the London bombings, the follow-up dialogue was better crafted and handled.

Persuasion

Rhetoric seeks persuasion either through argument based on appeals to reason and to emotions or through compellence as a result of action, usually the use of force. The range of rhetorical techniques and styles employed by Al Qaeda in its effort to persuade its target audiences are analysed throughout this Chapter but it is important to note that persuasion, specifically incitement and arousal to action, has been an explicit objective of Al Qaeda's rhetoric. It has had spectacular failures and successes in its bid to persuade and compel.

It is evident from bin Laden's statements before 9/11 and that he was convinced that the US could be compelled to leave the Middle East if it encountered sufficient casualties. This belief was based on bin Laden's interpretation of USA's behaviour in past conflicts abroad. For example, speaking about Somalia he says:

> *"They left after some resistance from powerless, poor, unarmed people whose only weapon is the belief in Allah the Almighty, and who do not fear the fabricated American media lies. We learned from those who fought there, that they were surprised to see the low spiritual morale of the American fighters in comparison with the experience they had with the Russian fighters. .... If the US still thinks and brags that it still has this kind of power even after all these successive defeats in Vietnam, Beirut, Aden, and Somalia, then let them go back to those who are awaiting its return."[310]*

What bin Laden seems to have ignored is how the USA would react differently to what it perceives as wars of choice and what it perceives as wars of necessity. The examples of Vietnam, Beirut, Aden and Somalia were ones where the US was engaged in foreign

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[310] Interview with Peter Arnett, CNN, March 1997.

policy activities out of choice. But the analogy most appropriate to the USA's reaction to an attack on its soil was Pearl Harbour, the response to which was to awake what Admiral Yamamoto described as "*a sleeping giant.*"

The USA responded to 9/11 by increasing its military presence in the Middle East and in other Muslim countries to an unprecedented level. When choosing its method of compellence Al Qaeda appears to have failed to make the distinction between the US' perception of the nature of attack and its subsequent reaction. Al Qaeda did, however, adapt rapidly to the USA's response. Intervention on the ground, especially in Afghanistan, gave Al Qaeda a second opportunity to compel the US to its will though insurgency warfare, an activity which Al Qaeda believed had already beaten the worlds 'greatest' superpower, the Soviet Union. Various insurgencies in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere erupted following the US led interventions. Non-Al Qaeda groups conduct many of these actions but Al Qaeda's rhetoric painted their actions as part of a global conflict between the West and Islam in which it was the vanguard.

In the meantime, bin Laden praised and defended the actions of the 9/11 cell and claimed responsibility for motivating them in the following manner:

> *"And they have done this because of our words-and we have previously incited and roused them into action-in self defence, defence of our brothers and sons in Palestine, and in order to free our holy sanctuaries."[311]*

This and other examples of spectacular attacks by Al Qaeda's members and sympathisers prove that it is extremely effective in persuading a small number of individuals to respond to its call through creative and daring operations that are designed to have a global impact on political debate. The prominence of incitement and arousal in Al Qaeda's discourse reveals that it differs from other terrorist organisations in emphasising ideology over operations. That way, it is able to maximise its influence by empowering others in a loose and dispersed network to act in support of its aims. This also means that traditional counterterrorism measures, which target individuals and groups structures, are less effective against Al Qaeda than they would be against a more conventional terror network. The effectiveness of Al Qaeda's rhetoric is, in large part, responsible for its continued survival.

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[311] Osama bin Laden 'Messages to the world' p.107

Nature of Rhetoric – Social Acceptance and Rejection

Social Credibility

The relationship between credibility and rhetoric has concerned philosophers throughout the ages. Socrates was amongst the most celebrated critics of rhetoric on the basis that evil men could manipulate others through superior oratory. This particular line of criticism is responsible for defining rhetoric as meaning "*all empty, insincere declarations*".[312] Rhetoric is seen here as a tool of persuasion that can be used to sell ideas that may or may not be considered wholesome. In today's world, where ideas vie with each other for supremacy and where basic truths are claimed to be self-evident, overt persuasion is seen as a sign of weakness. On the other hand, the ideas of 'the other' are invariably less self-evident and so are presumed to rely on rhetoric, a negatively loaded label for persuasion of an inferior idea.

This negative connotation is also found in a slightly different form in Islamic theological discourse. In Arabic, rhetoric is referred to as *kalam* but the word *kalam* may be more accurately translated as philosophical discourse. As such, it combines elements of the message with the style of communicating the idea. Most literalists or fundamentalist Muslims regard philosophy and rhetoric, when devoid of theocratic reference, as diversions from the truth of Islam and hence from all fundamental truths. The fundamentalists form a minority within the corpus of Islamic tradition but they are the antecedents of Al Qaeda's Islamist ideological inheritance. According to a prominent Al Qaeda ideologue, those who indulge in pure philosophy and rhetoric are considered to:

> *".... show the unpleasant depth to which they reached by busying themselves with Ilm ul-Kalām (knowledge of rhetoric) and philosophy detached from the guidance of the Qurān and Sunnah."*[313]

Here *kalam* is criticised more for its embedded message, which is taking the recipient into the realm of philosophically abstract man-made ideas and away from the truth of Islam, than it is for the rhetorical style used to convey the idea. This criticism differs from the Socratic one in that Socrates was concerned that rhetoric would seduce audiences into accepting ideas without critically analysing them. The fundamentalist

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[312] Op. Cit., Dixon, P. (1971). p.5.
[313] Al-Tartosi, S. A. (2000, October 18). *Conditions of "In the Name of Allah".* Retrieved February 2008 from abubaseer.bizland.com: www.abubaseer.bizland.com

view criticises the apparent divorce of philosophy from theology rather than rhetoric as a medium of communication.

The concern over conscious acceptance of rhetoric is found mainly in Muslim fundamentalist and conservative traditions. These traditions have resolved the apparent contradiction between their concerns over man-made philosophical discourse and the importance of rhetoric in furthering their own ideology by drawing on the oft-repeated Qur'anic injunction on believers to "*enjoin good and forbid evil*",[314] which allows them to use reasoning and argumentation to persuade others to adopt the righteous path. This injunction has parallels with the Sophists' claim to teach virtue through rhetoric. Just as the Sophists ended up teaching a skill equally able to guide and mislead people, Al Qaeda's claims and reality also diverge at times. Their rhetoric claims to draw solely on Islamic theology and in so doing shuns alternatives as man-made attempts to compete with the law of God. As other chapters show, discrepancies between their claims and their rhetoric exist albeit they are often heavily camouflaged.

Conclusions

The dearth of study of Al Qaeda's rhetoric reflects the relative neglect of this academic discipline. Mapping out Al Qaeda's messages against classical ideas of rhetoric shows that Al Qaeda comprehensively exploits the full range of rhetorical techniques. It seems to be keenly aware of its primary audiences, the Muslim and western communities. Although it has a good understanding of western government policies and reactions, it has not always succeeded in having its messages interpreted by them in the manner in which they were intended.

Al Qaeda's rhetoric is mainly aimed at Muslims to achieve persuasion through establishing an ethical stance rather than through purely rationalist argument. Its ethical stance is established by discrediting the morality and ethics of the West rather than by arguing for a superior ethical doctrine within Al Qaeda. Across the full spectrum of Al Qaeda's communications, classical rhetorical techniques are employed for maximum effect depending upon the subject matter of the communication and the

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[314] "Let there be among you a community who enjoin good and forbid evil; it is they that shall be successful", Holy Qur'an [3:104] This injunction is repeated in various forms in many other verses.

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intended audience. Judicial rhetoric is most often used in communications dealing with international relations, especially when directing the message to the West.

Deliberative rhetoric is most often employed when addressing Muslim societies. Here, fear, patriotism and pride are the most prevalent emotions exploited. On the rare occasion that the deliberative style is used in statements directed at the West, it is primarily employed to drive a wedge between sections of Western public opinion and their governments. Al Qaeda's inability to hold public ceremonies and rituals restricts the employment of demonstrative rhetoric to occasional eulogies for martyrs. Even then it is invariably combined with the other styles for maximum effect.

Al Qaeda's rhetoric is planned and often symbiotic with its own actions or world events. It is used to inspire actions before they occur as well as to explain actions after they take place. Al Qaeda makes a great effort to try to understand its audience and adapt its rhetoric to it but it has been more successful in communicating with Muslims than it has with the West. Its rhetoric is closely linked to its strategy, the first phase of which was "awakening" of the *ummah*. That awakening was only partially achieved and is now reinforced by linking into the common feelings of alienation, disenfranchisement and anger among Muslims worldwide. It depicted the audiences' individual political and personal struggles as a religious battle against state actors, principally the United States and Israel.

The concept of the far enemy is Al Qaeda's most original contribution to Jihadi ideology. It is the best example of Al Qaeda's ability to shift perceptions through rhetoric to create a significant coalition focussed against the West rather than on local struggles. It has been less successful in shifting Western public opinion and so Al Qaeda began to target black Americans in the hope that their feelings of alienation and disenfranchisement will help them identify with the reactionary worldview of Al Qaeda. That strategy appears to have failed.

Al Qaeda aims to adopt a forthright style in its messages. This is so as to be seen as ethically and ideologically superior and is evidence of the importance of clarity of communication within its political rhetoric. However, there are occasions when it needs to hide its motives through implicit messages. This is particularly so when dealing with the Palestinian issue where Al Qaeda cannot afford to be seen as spreading discord but

at the same time it wants to wrestle leadership of the Palestinian cause from Hamas's local political ambitions and project it as being at the centre of its global jihad.

Al Qaeda's rhetoric is both active and interactive. It set the agenda for its conflict in a number of statements and *fatwas* during the 1990s when it declared war on the West. Subsequently, it demonstrated its ability to react to world events, be they the knighting of Salman Rushdie or a presidential election in the USA. It is this desire to interact swiftly to world events that led to some of Al Qaeda's rhetorical mistakes. The 2006 invasion of Lebanon by Israel is an example of where statements by Al Qaeda were ambiguous and contradictory and where its rhetoric appeared most empty of substance. The interactive nature of rhetoric has influenced changes in its tactics. The Amman hotel bombings, for example, resulted in severe and sustained criticism from the Arab Muslim world. This led to a subtle restriction in its use of theological justifications for the use of violence against Muslim civilians.

All of Al Qaeda's rhetorical techniques, styles and actions are ultimately directed at persuasion. It is something that Al Qaeda recognizes and deliberately embarks upon. It has achieved success in inciting the various terrorist actions throughout the world in support of its ideology. It has been considerably less successful so far in persuading its adversaries to give in.

As in the West, kalam, the Arabic word for rhetoric, can have negative connotations especially in fundamentalist or literalist traditions, which criticise rhetoric that is divorced from theology and based purely on argumentation. Consequently, Al Qaeda's statements are often heavily garnished with scriptural references. The Qur'anic injunction to "enjoin good and forbid evil" in the world allows Islamists to offer purely reasoned or political argumentation as a 'religious' obligation.

Chapter Five: Rhetoric – Symbolism, Argumentation, Audience and Debate

This Chapter continues the methodology of the last chapter by employing features of rhetoric to analyse Al Qaeda's ideology. It begins with an assessment of symbolism, where actions become speech acts, and explores Al Qaeda's use of symbolism as reflective rhetoric. Toulmin's theories of argumentation are discussed to determine the extent to which Al Qaeda's persuasion strategy is susceptible to his ideas. A significant letter from the Movement to the West is then assessed to reveal aspects of its narrative dialogue and to demonstrate the utility of an 'unstructured' approach to argument analysis. Al Qaeda's understanding of its audience and the adaptation of its message and style too are probed to demonstrate inter alia the strengths and weaknesses it demonstrates in attempting to address a wide range of audiences. Finally, Al Qaeda's recognition that it is involved in a 'battle of ideas' is evaluated to expose its debating style and some of the ideological vulnerability it recognises.

Symbolism as Rhetoric

Most scholars discuss the use of symbols in rhetoric but their understanding of symbols is invariably symbolic speech rather than as symbolic action. Rhetoric is classically thought of as verbal but it can be equally potent in a visual or behavioural form. Art forms such as paintings can be a powerful medium of political rhetoric. Rowland encapsulates the point:

> *"While the most typical rhetorical acts are public speeches and essays, some rhetorical acts are based on non-linguistic symbolism. Picasso's Guernica is an example of a non-verbal work which makes a powerful rhetorical point."*[315]

Terrorism has been described as 'rhetoric of the deed', and Al Qaeda has used symbolic 'deeds' with devastating effect to supplement its textual message. Some authors use the term symbolic in the same sense as myth. Amin Maalouf, for example uses the term 'symbolic plain' in place of myth. It is not easy to challenge an existing myth and so his point is that a rhetorician must either reinforce the mythical worldview of his audience or change it without making them feel dislocated from their other myths:

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[315] Op. Cit., Rowland, R. C. (1985). p. 43.

> *"For a change to be accepted it isn't enough that it accords with the spirit of the age. It must also pass muster on the symbolic plain, without making those who are being asked to change feel they are betraying themselves."*[316]

While myth tends to be a broad idea mostly communicated textually, symbolic rhetoric communicates a more specific message. In the case of Al Qaeda symbolic rhetoric is mainly behavioural in nature but correct interpretation by the recipient is essential for it to be effective. Al Qaeda's attacks on US soil on 11 September were a premeditated symbolic act of communication. According to bin Laden the attackers' deeds were *"speeches that overshadowed all other speeches made everywhere else in the world. The speeches are understood by both Arabs and non-Arabs, even by Chinese."*[317] For bin Laden the attacks were speech acts but his claim that the message was understood appears not be borne out by reality, assuming that the message was to persuade the USA to remove its influence from the Middle East. Symbolic rhetoric is more frequently misunderstood than verbal language because the two sides in a dialogue often interpret a particular action or event differently, especially if they belong to different philosophical traditions.

Rhetoric as Symbolic Action – Reflective and Non-Reflective Rhetoric

Symbolic acts, particularly in the context of terrorism, are addressed primarily in terrorism literature rather than in rhetorical studies. Terrorism literature, in the main, tends to assess them simplistically as acts in support of a message or political strategy. Richard W. Leeman is virtually unique in considering terrorism and counterterrorism as rhetoric, arguing that terrorism is primarily a rhetorical act and US counter terrorist strategy has made use of rhetorical responses.[318] Leeman concentrates on rhetorical responses to terrorism rather than on terrorists' rhetoric. His hypothesis is that terrorism is part of a dialogue and the responses to it can only be determined by an understanding of the rhetorical situation in which the dialogue takes place.

Leeman further advocates that ethics and pragmatism should not be seen as mutually exclusive and that any counterterrorism dialogue involving a democratic society would be most effective if, in the words of Paul Wilkinson, Liberal Democracy remains *"true to itself"*, that is to say, to its ethical and legal principles. Leeman's work was done at a time

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[316] Maalouf, A. (2003). *In the Name of Identity.* London: Penguin books Ltd. p.73
[317] Osama bin Laden, in "Dinner Party Tape," December 13, 2001 Quoted in Richardson, L. (2006). *What Terrorists Want.* New York, USA: Random House.
[318] Leeman, R. W. (1991). *The Rhetoric of Terrorism and Counterterrorism.* Westport, CT : Greenwood Press.

when terrorists were assumed to not have an ethical case of their own and so he proposes a unilateral ethical stance in counterterrorism and does not consider the option of an ethical debate. Al Qaeda, however, makes a claim of moral equivalence that is symbolically expressed through the violence of terror.

> *"Is it logical for the United States and its allies to carry out this repression, persecution, plundering, and bloodletting over these long years without this being called terrorism, while when the victim tries to seek justice, he is described as terrorist?"[319]*

Leeman's recommendation that the response to terrorism must be ethical without acknowledging that terrorism can be in support of an ethical claim illustrates the virtual absence of recognition that the symbolic rhetoric of terrorism also attempts to communicate ethical arguments.

In its employment of symbolic violence Al Qaeda adopts 'reflective' rhetoric. Leeman explains that 'reflective' rhetoric is where the rhetor responds in a manner that either mimics or reflects the opponent's style and 'non-reflective' rhetoric is where the rhetor does not. The parties in a rhetorical dialogue select one of these options based on what they see as most compelling for their argumentation style, their conflict strategy or their ethical stance. Leeman concludes that in order for reflective rhetoric to be effective, it must be recognised as such by both sides.

Terrorists often claim they are using violence in a reflective sense; they are merely responding to the perceived brutality and flawed ethics of states that invariably have the capacity for superior violence. Mohammad Sidique Khan, the leader of the London 7/7 bombers, made this point in his 'martyrdom' video:

> *" This is how our ethical stances are dictated. Your democratically elected governments continuously perpetuate atrocities against my people all over the world. And your support of them makes you directly responsible, just as I am directly responsible for protecting and avenging my Muslim brothers and sisters. Until we feel security, you will be our targets."[320]*

Implicit in Khan's statement is that the symbolic horror of his single action has to equate to the collective horror of years of atrocities committed against his *"brothers and sisters."*

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[319] Ghaith, S. A. (2001, October 10). *World: Middle East.* Retrieved August 3, 2010 from BBC News: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/1590350.stm

[320] Khan, M. S. (2005, September 1). Video Statement Broadcast on Al Jazeera. Quoted in: *House of Commons Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London on 7th July 2005* . London: The Stationery Office 11 May 2006.

Consequently his act has to be as horrific as possible to symbolise the violence it alleges to reflect.

State actors rarely recognise the reflective nature of terrorism as political violence and categorise it as criminal violence or wonton destruction. A point that Al Qaeda's symbolic ethical stance fails to address is that the civilian victims of Western violence against Muslims are depicted as indirect casualties of its policies and operations whilst Al Qaeda admits to directly targeting civilians. It does argue that the West's actions are reckless and that even when it is obvious that civilians are suffering, as in the case of Iraq, the West rarely stops its actions. However, these subtle distinctions are not, and possibly cannot be, communicated through its symbolic violence and so its adversaries see what Al Qaeda regards reflective ethics, as being evidence of its unethical ideology.

The "*politics of atrocity*" theory proposed by Rapoport suggests that terrorists use reflective rhetoric to incite "*counter-atrocities rebounding to the advantage of the original assailant.*"[321] That is to say, acts of terrorism are intended not as reprisals or warnings to stop violence but as provocations to increase violence against the people that the terrorists aim to represent. Terrorists thereby generate more grievances to legitimise their political claims and violent actions. While there are many examples of this tactic in other groups, Al Qaeda has not given any indication that it invited an escalation. On the contrary, bin Laden's statements during the 1990s clearly indicate that he reasoned the USA would withdraw from the Middle East if it faced a loss of life, as it had withdrawn from Vietnam, Beirut and Somalia in the face of US casualties. Al Qaeda continues to complain that the USA has failed to learn the "*lesson*" of 11 September.[322] However, Al Qaeda has failed understand that its message has not been accepted because its dialectic of symbolic violence is either too complex to be understood or too easily misrepresented.

Although Leeman doesn't address the point, it is feasible that this misunderstanding of symbolic reflective and non-reflective discourse may be a reason why terrorism-based conflicts take considerably longer to resolve than conventional warfare. Even in

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[321] Rapoport, D. (1992). Terrorism. In M. Hawkesworth, & M. Kogan (Eds.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Government and Politics* (p. 1192). London: Routlledge.
[322] For example see, Scheuer, M. (2004). *Imperial Hubris*. New York: Brassey's. p.153.

conventional political conflict, *"the message sent is almost never the message received."*[323] Terrorism as symbolic violence is most effective at conveying a simple message such as provoking a *"counter-atrocity."* It appears unsuited to complex discourse such as those involving ethical claims. That is probably why Al Qaeda's symbolic acts of violence are supplemented by textual and verbal rhetoric. Understanding the dialogue requires juxtaposing both types of rhetoric, something that is rarely considered. Indeed, the novelty of Leeman's work is best judged by the fact that in his substantial bibliography listing publications on terrorism and rhetoric, not a single reference contains both words in the same title.

Persuasion through Argumentation and Narratives

Limitations of Argumentation Theories

Toulmin categorised arguments as being either 'substantial' or 'analytic' arguments.[324] The latter being an argument based on Plato's ideal deductive logic, which does not go beyond the material contained in the argument's premises. The former is an argument based on drawing inferences from premises and evidence to come to a conclusion. Essentially, the distinction is between theoretical scientific logic and everyday practical reasoning. Toulmin attempts to recognize a *"third, intermediate approach to the analysis of substantive arguments"* which replaces the view that rhetoric is a *"dishonest persuasion"* in contrast to the formal proofs of logic. *"Substantive arguments are historically situated and rely on the evidence of experience."*[325] This is basically an expansion of his theory of argument fields in which he postulates that premises and factual claims of an argument are grounded within a particular discourse. That discourse in turn reflects the social and cultural norms of the communities involved. This point reaffirms Leeman's claim that the dialogue of terrorism should be understood in the light of the *"rhetorical situation in which"*[326] it takes place. It follows that where the parties have different cultural norms, both societal and cultural, the argument style must become bi-cultural if it is to be understood by both parties.

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[323] Jarvis, R. (1970). *The Logic of Images in International Relations.* Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press. p.119.
[324] Op. Cit., Toulmin, S. (1958).
[325] Toulmin, S. (2001). *The Return to Reason.* Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. P.19.
[326] Op. Cit., Leeman, R. W. (1991)

However, according to Toulmin, communities learn to distrust each other; or distrust other entities such as commercial ones and so avoid accepting their claims on face value. Members of communities are bound together by what Aristotle called "*the highest form of friendship or relationship (philia): the philia that unites people whose interest lies not in profiting from one another's situations, but in enjoying together shared good things.*"[327] This affection, cooperation and empathy to the in-group invariably leads to an opposite emotional response to the out-group. Although Toulmin develops this idea in the context of military training and the role of discipline, it has much wider application. It essentially states that arguments between "us" and the "other" are either unexplored because they are rejected as being inherently baseless, or if explored, are sceptically critiqued. Al Qaeda's ability to persuade its two primary audiences, the West and the Muslim world, is consequently related to the relative philia within and between these communities. Also, the appeal of Al Qaeda's messages is related to the extent it can create a common bond around "*shared good things.*" Therefore, the issues of reception and acceptance complicate understanding the already problematic reflective and non-reflective rhetoric.

Toulmin divided his argument fields into two types: "field invariant" and "field dependant". Field invariant are those that are common to all types of discourse and communities. "Field dependant" arguments are those that are specific to a particular discourse or community. Ordinarily, both types would apply. When a party stresses the field invariant style it indulges in absolutism and when a party stresses the field dependant form it embarks on relativism. The latter style can lead to ambiguity over the morality or immorality of an argument. Toulmin resolved the issue by structuring arguments in a manner that allowed their worth to be objectively critiqued without resort either to absolutism or relativism. He did this by defining three essential components of an effective argument: claim, data and warrant; and three optional components: backing, rebuttal and qualifier.

The problem with this method is that it both requires that the argument be heard and that there be at least a subliminal, if not conscious, understanding of the weight of the components in making the argument. Such critical analysis tends to be restricted to the courtroom or debating chamber. For the method to be effective in these circumstances a

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[327] Op. Cit., Toulmin, S. (2001). p.34. Quoted from *Nicomachean Ethics*, VIII. iii, 1156a, p.6-7.

presumption of validity (stated as a presumption of innocence in court) must exist so that arguments are rejected only when proven to be lacking. The judgement on validity of the argument consequently requires the existence of a third impartial party, the judges or jury in a legal context or the 'House' in a debating situation. Analogous situations do exist in international relations when there is, for example, an arbitration process such as in conflict resolution but these are rare. They virtually never exist in cases of discourses supplemented by acts of terrorism and so Toulmin's theory of components of argument has limited utility. Furthermore, arguments advanced by terrorist groups are invariably rejected without being 'heard' because they are seen as coming from a 'distrusted community'. The style of argument and its construction in these cases ceases to be addressed as it is not analysed or confronted by the recipient.

Argument as Narrative

Ideologies tend to make separate cases to their constituency and to their adversary. In both instances, there is no 'impartial' party to judge validity. The technical construction of the argument is consequently of less significance than its emotional appeal. Terrorists present arguments to their constituency in order to gain support by making sense of a crisis, by offering a solution and by offering a promise of deliverance. Their case to an adversary underpins a strategy of coercion or deterrence by demoralising and by increasing fear and confusion. Terrorists acting against democracies have moreover to vie for public opinion, requiring the presentation of an argument that justifies the terrorists' case as well as discrediting the democratic government.   In these circumstances the argument or case is frequently cloaked within a narrative that presents a mythical version of history, a selective contemporary reality and an ideal future. This utility of narrative in persuasion is acknowledged in Toulmin's more recent work:

> *"Convincing narratives have a kind of weight that mathematical formula do not. They allow others to revive moral argumentation in disciplines that, since the eighteenth century, had aimed at value neutrality; in the process, they bridge the gulf between science and literature."*[328]

Al Qaeda's message to its constituency is therefore more appropriately analysed as a narrative than as a purely judicial argument.   Being largely grievance-based, it has been

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[328] Ibid. p.123.

labelled the 'Single Narrative' to describe the singular framing of a variety of situations and events as grievances in Muslim societies and to which the sole legitimate response is articulated through Al Qaeda's ideology. Effective analysis consequently needs to pinpoint elements within the narrative which identify the crises facing Al Qaeda's constituency, which propagate the myth of perpetual conflict between the forces of good and evil, which articulate the obligation to urgently act and which promise success in terms of either personal salvation or collective victory. These narrative components cannot easily be seen as arguments susceptible to deduction by logic, in terms of Toulmin's categories. Even treating them as 'substantial' arguments is problematic because the premises are mythical and so are by definition contestable.

Toulmin's third intermediate approach, viewing the argument as 'historically situated' and relying on 'evidence as experience,' then becomes more relevant if 'evidence as experience' is understood as belief or worldview of the recipient.

Deconstructing Al Qaeda's Dialogue

In the dialogue with its primary adversary, the West, Al Qaeda is aware of confusion surrounding its aims as well as what it regards as an inability of the West to see its side of the story. Its statements adopt a clear and structured approach to explaining its objectives, the reasons for its actions and how these will lead to victory either through Al Qaeda's use of violence or by the West's peaceful acceptance of Al Qaeda's case. One of the best examples of this style is found in a letter to "The Americans" issued on 6 October 2002. The letter poses and answers two questions: "*Why are we fighting you?*" and *"what are we calling you to do, and what do we want from you?* Lawrence identifies the construction as rooted in the "*Arab fatwa tradition*" where "*opinions are couched as detailed responses to specific questions, broken down into sections and subsections in such a way as to emphasize the irrefutable logic of jihad.*"[329]

Despite being rooted in an alien tradition, the letter's construction indicates that it was drafted to make it accessible to a Western audience. With the exception of a few religious references, quoted to establish first principles and authority, there are no other symbolic devices such as poetry and parables that may not easily translate to a Western tradition. The points made are generally succinct and evidential, albeit some of the

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[329] Op. Cit., Lawrence, B. (2005). p.160.

'evidence' and claims are contestable, and there are a couple of overtly cynical comments. These last features and the extensive criticism of Western social and moral norms further indicate that the letter is intended also for Muslim and extremist 'spectators' in an imagined gallery. This duality of audience and mixture of style detracts from its potential effectiveness as some of the points made to appeal to an Islamist audience can come across as "rants" and "hate speech"[330] to a Western mindset.

Structure of Argument

Establishing Authority

The letter begins with a quotation from the Qur'an intended to establish the authority of self-defence and state the Divine promise of success for those who fight:

> *"Those who have been attacked are permitted to take up arms because they have been wronged - God has the power to help them (believers) victory."*[331]

The second verse attempts to legitimise a bipolar conflict between the forces of good and the forces of evil. It also attempts to associate Al Qaeda with God's authority and uses that association to delegitimize and weaken its opponents:

> *"The believers fight for God's cause, while those who reject faith fight for an unjust cause. Fight not for the allies of Satan: surely, Satan's strategy is weak."*[332]

The first paragraph acts as an introduction to lay out the reason for the latter as being the question that some American writers have asked about the basis on which Al Qaeda is fighting. The resulting debate caused confusion and so Al Qaeda wanted to outline the "*true*" explanation. The first question follows, "*why are we fighting and opposing you?*" It is answered by listing three main points, each with up to seven sub-clauses and up to five sub-sub-clauses.

Listing Grievances

The first answer is simply "*because you attacked us and continue to attack us.*" This is amplified by listing the places in which the West is alleged to have attacked Muslims including Palestine, Somalia, Chechnya, Kashmir and Lebanon. The West is also accused

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[330] Op. Cit., Hegghammer, T. (2008, April 4). p. 15-17.
[331] Qur'an, 22:39 as translated in Op. Cit., Lawrence, B. (2005). p.161.
[332] Qur'an 4:76.

of attacking Muslims via compliant Islamic governments, stealing the wealth of Muslims, occupying Muslim lands, starving and killing up to 1.5 million Iraqi children and supporting Israel and the Jews, particularly over Jerusalem.

The second point is that this list comprises only a few examples of oppression and aggression by the West. Al Qaeda's response of Jihad, resistance and revenge is alleged to be a command of its religion. However, Al Qaeda recognizes that this 'religious' point may not chime with its secular audience and so it goes on to reinforce it with a 'rational' rhetoric, "*is it in any way rational to expect that after America has attacked us for more than half a century, that we will then leave her to live in security and peace*?"

Justifying Terrorism

The third point directly confronts a major criticism of Al Qaeda's tactic of terrorism: "*you may then dispute that all the above does not justify aggression against civilians, for crimes they did not commit and offences in which they did not participate*". This criticism is countered by arguing that since America is a democratic government where civilians choose their governments then the failure to restrain their government's oppressive actions makes them liable. Furthermore, it is the American people who fund the oppression of Muslim peoples through taxes. Finally, the American army is identified as being "*part of the American people*" and the American people are the ones who "*employ both their men and their women in the armed forces*" which attack the Muslims. And so the American people are not innocent and it is argued that the Almighty has legislated the avenging of their oppression.

This line of reasoning exposes the limitations of employing the argument construction approach to analysis. There is little to be gained by deconstructing the Letter's arguments into component parts. However, identifying and confronting the major premises can more effectively challenge the argument. Al Qaeda accepts that killing innocent civilians is forbidden according to Islam. It consequently attempts to argue that Western civilians are not innocent and that Western societies bear collective civil responsibility for the actions of their regimes.

Al Qaeda's case could be challenged by arguing that civilians are indeed innocent but would result in complexity surrounding definitions of civilian, innocence and responsibility. Another option may be to confront its ethical premise: that the situation

of collective civil responsibility exists in democratic countries and, by implication, did not exist at the time of the advent of Islam and the Prophet's exemplar life. This implied premise can be shown as false. The Prophet and the early Muslims were attacked, tortured and killed by a number of tribes and clans. Those tribes and clans occasionally elected their leaders and invariably consulted (*shura*) over decisions involving violent action. Despite this, there is no clause in the Qur'an that allows the killing of non-combatants and there is no reliable account of the Prophet ever doing so or condoning any such action.[333]

This example of confronting Al Qaeda's narrative shows the relative effectiveness of traditional "unstructured" debating techniques informed by relevant knowledge of the historical, theological and cultural context, over elaborate models of components of argument. The example further exposes the tenuous connection between Al Qaeda's ideology and its claim to be a true manifestation of Islam. It illustrates how Al Qaeda needs to act outside the constraints of classical Islamic theology but present itself as being bound to it. Al Qaeda is tethered to Islamic theology via a number of weak and synthetic arguments. These arguments are vulnerable to serious critical analysis.

Clarifying Demands

The second question: "*what are we calling you to, and what do we want from you?*" is answered first by a call to Islam and a description of its tenets according to Al Qaeda. The second demand is that the West stops the "*oppression, lies, immorality, and debauchery,*" that has apparently spread amongst it. The West is told to reject its inappropriate sexual habits, its dependence on intoxicants, gambling and usury. The West is accused of being "*the worst civilisation witnessed in the history of mankind.*" Amongst many failings listed, the West is accused of inventing AIDS, destroying nature, failing to sign the Kyoto agreement and of unnecessarily dropping nuclear bombs on

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[333] One exception referenced by some commentators is of the Jewish tribe, Banu Quraidhah, which reneged on a peace treaty with the Muslims and joined pagan tribes to attack the Muslims. The Muslims just managed to fight off the combined attack and confronted the Quraidhah about their 'treason'. At the Quraidhah's request, the matter was referred to the judgement of a former Jewish leader who decided that the tribe had committed an act of treason and sentenced some adult males to death (with exceptions for those who repented). The numbers killed is contested with some sources citing 600 or more but others claiming this to be a gross exaggeration. Collective punishment is considered un-Islamic and so some Muslim scholars point out that the ex-Jewish judge could not impose Islamic law on Jews, as that would infringe the right to freedom of religion. Instead the judgement and executions were carried out according to Jewish law (Deuteronomy 20:10-14). See for example, Arafat, W. N. (1976). New Light on the Story of Banu Qurayza and the Jews of Medina. *Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* , 100-107.

Japan. The major characteristic of the West is identified as "*duality in both manners and values;*" examples of this included democracy for the white races and not for countries such as Algeria where an Islamic party would have been democratically elected, possessing weapons of mass destruction and of permitting Israel to have them whilst condemning and preventing others from developing them, the failure to make or abide by UN resolutions when against the interest of Israel and the creation of international criminal courts whilst seeking an exemption for American citizens.

The invitation to embrace Islam within the second demand is intended to placate a section of Islamists who believe that the attacks of 9/11 were invalid because the Americans had not been invited to accept Islam before being subject to "punishment". This invitation and the rest of the demand, which condemns American society for its moral and cultural bankruptcy, are intended primarily for bin Laden's Islamist audience. The argument is an attempt to demonstrate the reasonableness of Al Qaeda's approach by showing that it has attempted to resolve the conflict through peaceful debate while simultaneously reinforcing the need to fight the West on account of its evil nature. There is no serious attempt to persuade the USA or expectation that it will either convert to Islam or change its political, social and economic behaviour. Indeed, after asking the West to accept Islam, bin Laden confirms, "*I doubt you will do so.*" Consequently the language towards the USA is highly critical and threatening. No attempt has been made to give an attractive description of Islam in the letter. No claim is made about Islam's ability to bring man closer to his Creator, improve his morality or produce a healthier society. Al Qaeda seems to not want the USA to even be tempted to convert to Islam because that would weaken Al Qaeda's basis for confrontation.

The litany of criticisms of Western lifestyle and values has its antecedents in Qutubian philosophy. It is in part a reaction to perceived cultural imperialism or what Buruma and Margalit call "*imperialism of the mind*"[334] in the Muslim world and is intended to chime with a disenfranchised Islamist audience. The specific criticisms listed vary between the false and the factual. The claim that the USA invented AIDS is patently false based on data that indicates AIDS originated in Africa and that North America has amongst the lowest incidences of the disease in its population. On the other hand, the allegation that the USA used atomic weapons against Japan, not for compelling political

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[334] Op. Cit., Buruma, I., & Margalit, A. (2005).

and military reasons but merely to hasten an end to the war, is grounded in evidence.[335] Furthermore, charges of hypocrisy over human rights, particularly the allegation that what happened in Guantanamo is "*a historical embarrassment to America and its values*" are failings recognized by the USA itself.

The vulnerability of the West to some of these criticisms arises out of the failure of Western liberal democracy to remain "*true to itself*". The refusal of the USA to sign the Kyoto treaty and the threat posed to civil liberties by the Patriot Act are other examples of criticisms of the US Government, originating from within the country, that are exploited in the Letter in order to discredit the Western political and social system.

These criticisms, real or imagined, are not novel creations of Al Qaeda. The myths they are based on abound in the communities from which Al Qaeda draws its support. Al Qaeda has merely harnessed a latent and growing trend of Occidentalism throughout the world in order to underpin its claim of a crisis point in the alleged persistent conflict between Islam and the West.

The third demand is that the USA honestly confronts its hypocritical stance on principles and manners. Other demands include the ceasing of oppression in Muslim lands, that the USA packs its bags and "*get out of our lands*", that it stops support of corrupt leaders in "*our countries*" and that it deals with "*us and interact with us on the basis of mutual interests and benefits, rather than the policies of subjugation, theft and occupation.*" This demand, more clearly than the others, betrays Al Qaeda's attempt to positioning itself as the self-styled champion of Muslims even though its constituency within the Islamic world is small. Rather than making a case for peaceful resolution it ends up making a case for war by declaring to the USA that failure to respond to its demands would result in a fight with the *ummah*. The *ummah* is described as a "*nation of monotheism*", "*honour and respect*", "*martyrdom*" and "*victory*". This romantic description of an imagined community, the *ummah*, unwittingly reveals Al Qaeda's exploitation of myth in its constructed identity.

Rhetoric and Audience

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[335] "Several high-ranking US military commanders, including Eisenhower and McArthur, Supreme Allied Commanders in the Southwest Pacific, felt that there was no military justification for the bombings. In a 1946 report, the United States Strategic Bombing Survey noted that Japan would in all probability have surrendered even if the atomic bombs had not been dropped." Quoted in Op. Cit., Lawrence, B. (2005). p.168.

Knowledge of an audience's "*values, experiences, beliefs, social status, and aspirations,*"[336] can make a message understandable, appealing and concise, by avoiding unnecessary explanations. This last feature is what Aristotle called an *enthymeme*; an argument built on common values and beliefs, avoiding the stating of shared or self-evident claims. Myth is the primary vehicle for transmitting and sharing common values and beliefs. The challenge of understanding the audience's 'mind' is a problem that has vexed experts ever since rhetoric was studied as a subject. The Chinese theorists on rhetoric, Han Fei-tzu, wrote in 280 BC that:

> "*the difficult thing about persuading others is not that one lacks knowledge needed to state his case nor the audacity to exercise his ability to the full. On the whole, the difficult thing is to know the mind of the person one is trying to persuade and to be able to fit ones words to it.*"[337]

Assessing Rhetorical Impact

There is no reliable assessment of the impact Al Qaeda rhetoric on its audience. A study based on citation analysis by the Combating Terrorism Centre indicated that bin Laden and Zawahiri were insignificant when it came to their statements being downloaded or read on certain websites.[338] However, this finding is misleading. Neither bin Laden nor Zawahiri provide much original theoretical reference material for Islamist extremists. Their speech is action orientated and exploits theological and theoretical material produced by other ideologues. Also, legislation to control the possession and distribution of material that glorifies terrorism is very likely to cause Islamist extremists to avoid material from Al Qaeda's core ideologues on publicly accessible websites. Extremists can more safely quote classical ideologues such as Ibn Taymiyyah and Sayyid Qutb. Given the reputation of these ideologues, their texts carry more weight in justifying Al Qaeda's rhetoric than the contested claims of its current leaders.

The impact of Al Qaeda's rhetoric is best judged by the impact it has had on global conflicts. In over a decade and a half, it has initiated some of the longest running conflicts in the modern era in Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia and other countries. Its followers continue to plot terrorist attacks in the West. The number of groups wishing to affiliate with Al Qaeda is growing to include groups from Yemen and the Maghreb.

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[336] Op. Cit., Herrick, J.A. (2005). p 9.
[337] Han Fei-tzu, "Records of the Grand Historian", quoted in Op. Cit., Herrick, J.A. (2005). p. 266.
[338] McCants, Brachman, & Felter. (2006). *Militant Ideology Atlas: Executive Report.* Combating Terrorism Centre. United States Military Academy, West Point.

Rhetorical ability has been the single most significant factor behind these and its other successes.

Al Qaeda's greatest rhetorical success has been its ability to articulate its audience's social and political grievances. Addressing the Saudi regime and its people in August 1996 bin Laden states:

> "…The intimidation and harassment suffered by the leaders of the society, the scholars, heads of tribes, merchants, academic teachers and other eminent individuals…The miserable situation of the social services and infrastructure, especially the water service and supply, the basic requirement of life…"[339]

His keen knowledge of the complaints and pressures of ordinary Muslims is deftly linked to the wider theme of the unjust regimes of the Gulf propped up by the United States:

> "…The crusader forces became the main cause of our disastrous condition, particularly in the economical part of it, due to the unjustifiably heavy spending on these forces…"[340]

The international composition of Al Qaeda also allows it to access experts for many regions. Ayman al Zawahiri for example, is Egyptian by birth but has spent time in both Afghanistan and Pakistan and is aware of the power of direct messages to a specific audience. His address on the controversial Red Mosque siege by Pakistani security forces in July 2007 was aimed directly at Pakistani Muslims angered by their government's actions; again this statement linked the Regime's actions to the idea of a grander Christian-Zionist conspiracy against Islam:

> "…Musharraf and his hunting dogs have rubbed your honour in the dirt in the service of the crusaders and the Jews, and if you don't retaliate for your honour, Musharraf won't spare any of you and won't stop until he eradicates Islam from Pakistan…"[341]

Playing the Race Card

Al Qaeda's appreciation of American society is, however, less impressive. In a speech which includes excerpts from Malcolm X's famous rhetoric, Ayman Al Zawahiri sought to appeal to Black minorities within the United States to fight a government that does not value them:

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[339] Osama bin Laden, *Declaration of war against the United States,* Aug 96.
[340] Ibid.
[341] Zawahiri, A. (Jul 07). *Aggression against Lal Masjid.*

> *"...The culture...Malcolm X (May Allah have mercy upon him) fought against when he told his repressed black brothers in America 'If you're not prepared to die for it, take the word freedom out of your vocabulary' and he said also, about his religion al-Islam, 'I believe in a religion that believes in freedom. Anytime I have to accept a religion that won't let me fight a battle for my people, I say to hell with that religion.'..."*[342]

By associating itself with a Black American militant, Al Qaeda attempted to make its existence and objectives more accessible to at least part of the US population. Zawahiri's choice of quote from Malcolm X was especially apt as it linked Al Qaeda's use of force to the concept of freedom, something that most Americans would recognise as part of their own political ideology. Al Qaeda has sought to target the black population of America on a number of occasions and to widen its appeal to other sections of the world's disadvantaged peoples. Zawahiri makes the claim that Al Qaeda's Jihad is the struggle for all disenfranchised mankind, not just Muslims:

> *"I want blacks in America, people of colour, American Indians, Hispanics, and all the weak and oppressed in North and South America, in Africa and Asia, and all over the world, to know that when we wage Jihad in Allah's path, we aren't waging Jihad to lift oppression from the Muslims only, we are waging Jihad to lift oppression from all of mankind, because Allah has ordered us never to accept oppression whatever it may be."*[343]

This theme was resurrected after the election of Barak Obama in the US Presidential elections of 2008 when Zawahiri once again used Malcolm X to discriminate against Black Americans who were part of the Western Liberal Democratic process and those who may still be disillusioned by it. Zawahiri talks about Malik al-Shabazz who was born to a Black Pastor killed by white bigots. Shabazz converted to Islam, stood up for Muslims and the oppressed and was eventually himself killed. Zawahiri contrasts Shabazz with Obama who was born of a Muslim father and turned his back on his Father's religion and was seen praying with the Jews and has confirmed his support for Israel. Zawahiri irreverently points out to Obama:

> *"in you and in Colin Powell, Rice and your like, the words of Malcolm X (may Allah have mercy on him) concerning 'House Negroes' are confirmed."*[344]

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[342] Zawahiri, A. (May 07). *Interview with Shaykh Zawahiri.*

[343] Zawahiri, A. (May 07). *The Empire of Evil Is about to End, and a New Dawn Is about to Break Over Mankind.*

[344] Zawahiri, A. (19 Nov 08). *On the Parting of Bush and the Arrival of Obama.* Released on As-Sahab Website.

The statement attempts to dislocate those Black Americans who participate in the US government from those who may feel alienated and who would consequently sympathise with Al Qaeda's grievances of oppression and injustice at the hands of America.

The arguments are, to a large extent, hypothetical as few American citizens access Al Qaeda's speeches. Furthermore, Al Qaeda's campaign to cause a fissure in US society by attempting to woo blacks reveals a lack of sophistication in its understanding of US political ideology. Divisive militants such as Malcolm X and al-Shabazz failed to garner significant support amongst even the black population whereas inclusive leaders such as Martin Luther King and Obama have succeeded in winning support from all parts of the US population. Rather than weakening American resolve, these attempts could possibly confirm to the US population that Al Qaeda is a militant and divisive movement that threatens rather than safeguards civil rights and social freedoms.

Debating as a Battle of Ideas

Al Qaeda sees itself as fighting a "*battle of ideas*" and it declares the battle as "*one of the fierce fronts of the confrontation between us and our enemies.*"[345] This battle involves defending against what it perceives as attacks on its ideology. Most of these attacks come from Muslims and Al Qaeda's attitude indicates that it perceives the most dangerous as emanating from erstwhile fellow Islamist extremists. The reason for its sensitivity to these attacks arises out of Al Qaeda's fear that they threaten its legitimacy and authority to claim the truth of Islam. In 2007, Abu Yahya al-Libi outlined six fronts in the battle of ideas. He proposed confronting the issue through debate that matched the rhetorical quality of the attack. He claimed that the Al Qaeda Jihad has:

> "*to meet argument with argument and eloquence with eloquence; to discuss treatises and rebut misconceptions; to remove misguidance, correct mistakes and rectify deviation; and deliver its speech with clarity and pureness and without fearing the blame of the blamer.*"[346]

The importance of rhetorical content (argumentation, discussions and rebuttals), style (eloquence and clarity) and credibility (pureness and without fearing) are evident in al-Libi's strategy for the battle of ideas. Although he provided rebuttals for specific

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[345] Al-Libi, A. Y. (2007, September 9). Dots on the Letters. *Al-Sahab's Second Interview with Shaykh Abu Yahya al-Libi.* (Unkown, Interviewer) Al-Sahab Website.
[346] Ibid.

arguments, his main purpose was to identify the major lines of attack. By so doing he attempted to inoculate Al Qaeda followers against the shock effects of the ideological assault. In the process he inadvertently also revealed Al Qaeda's perception of its own rhetorical weaknesses as well as its defensive strategy for dealing with ideological attacks in those areas.

Dealing with Dissent

Al-Libi claims that the first tactic used by its enemies is to propagate the "backtracking" of prominent leaders of jihad now in prison. This backtracking involves recantations from their jihadi beliefs and their urging of others to do the same. Al-Libi was obviously referring to a recantation by Sayid Iam al-Sharif (aka Dr Fadl) made a few months previously via a fax to a London newspaper and an expected book by al-Sharif denouncing jihadi ideology.[347] Al-Sharif had been the initiator of the Islamic Jihad extremist organisation in Egypt and had written a book called *Preparation for Holy War*, which was to become a training manual for jihadi groups including Al Qaeda.

Al-Sharif's attack was most worrisome because it was aimed at Al Qaeda's main myths of jihad, religious authority and success. He claimed that the conditions necessary to declare a jihad had not been met in Al Qaeda operations. He had previously approved of jihad in the context of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan but Al Qaeda had not met the necessary conditions when it attacked the USA. Indeed, by attacking the USA Al Qaeda operatives had broken the covenant of security that they had entered into by applying for visas to that country. Al-Sharif, who had been referred to as the "*Mufti of the Mujahedeen*," accused Al Qaeda of lacking the authority to rule on Islamic law saying that it had no "*theorist or a mufti other than what Bin Laden decides on the basis of his personal view*."[348] Finally, he blamed bin Laden for the fall of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, alleging that it showed disobedience to Mullah Omar, the Emir to whom bin Laden had pledged loyalty.[349] In this last claim al-Sharif both attacked Al Qaeda's myth of success as well as its myth of unity and loyalty to the *ummah*.

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[347] Black, I. (2007, July 27). Violence won't work. *The Guardian* .
[348] al-Sharif, S. I.-a.-A. (2007). *Correct Guidance on Jihad in Egypt and the World.* Cairo: Serialised in Egyption and Kuwaiti Newspapers late Nov to Early Dec 2007.
[349] Bin Laden had previously issued a statement taking full responsibility for the attacks on US soil and blaming the West for punishing the Taliban for something they had not done. Presumably this statement had been the source of al-Sharif's criticism and so bin Laden chose to say no more.

Zawahiri and Al-Libi responded with forceful statements to counter the claims in al-Sharif's book. Al-Libi attempted to discredit al-Sharif by suggesting that the recantation had been forced. Zawahiri used the same tactic in a statement and in his subsequent 200-page rebuttal. He claimed, "*Because I consider this document to be an insult to the Muslim nation, I chose for the rebuttal the name 'The Exoneration,' in order to express the nation's innocence of this insult.*"[350] Zawahiri's description of al-Sharif's challenge as being as "*an insult to the Muslim nation*" is an attempt to displace the criticism from Al Qaeda to one on all Muslims. Zawahiri then went on to cite over 30 religious authorities in support of his interpretation of jihad. Most were either dead, members of Al Qaeda or not recognized as authorities. One was in fact al-Sharif. Zawahiri even quoted the dictionary definition of 'visa' to prove that there was no mention of a security contract between the issuer and recipient.

The purpose of these desperate and detailed attempts to claim legitimacy was to re-establish the credibility of Al Qaeda's interpretation or myth of jihad in the face of attacks by an individual who once had greater 'religious' credibility than any existing Al Qaeda member. That is why Al Qaeda responded publicly for the first time to internal dissent. Subsequently, for about a year senior Al Qaeda personalities continued to make reference to al-Sharif. The incident revealed the sensitivity that Al Qaeda had to internal challenges to its ideology, specifically to its claim to represent the authentic teachings of jihad and the voice of Islam.

In 2009, members of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) issued a recantation from prison. That too included an in-depth revision of theological issues relevant to Jihad and *takfir*. The recantation began with an attempt to define a Muslim in the broadest possible terms, which included "*anyone who dresses like a Muslim*." The aim of the 400 page document was to make non-state sanctioned jihad virtually illegitmate and to make the attacking of one Muslim by another impossible.[351] Having expended most of its defencive arguments on al-Sharif, Al Qaeda chose not to confront the LIFG's arguments perfering instead to dismiss it as the result of capitulation under the harsh conditions of Libyan imprisonment. As part of the process of discrediting recantations made after

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[350] Ibid.

[351] For a partial translation of the LIFG Recantation see: (Translated by) Musawi, M. A. (2009). *A Selected Translation of the LIFG Recantation Document.* Retrieved September 13, 2010 from www.quilliamfoundation.org: http://www.quilliamfoundation.org/images/a_selected_translation_of_the_lifg.pdf

imprisonment, Al Qaeda spokemen have taken to adding a clause to their statements declaring that should they subsequently backtrack, their recantations should be ignored.

Al-Sharif's accusation that Al Qaeda has worsened rather than improved the political lot of Muslims is underwritten by the Qur'anic teaching, "*On no soul does Allah place a burden greater than it can bear.*"[352]   He argued that the Muslims were too weak to conduct jihad against the West and so were not obliged to; doing so under the circumstances was to invite defeat. This general point seems to be accepted by both al-Libi and Zawahiri.   After declaring that jihad was necessary in equal measure against the Jews, Christians, Hindus and apostates, al-Libi regards the opening up of simultaneous battlefronts against all of them as not being "*legally or rationally desirable.*" The legal authority used to support his rational power calculation is the same Qur'anic verse used by al-Sharif.   Zawahiri also does not challenge al-Sharif's application of the Qur'anic text. He merely disagrees with al-Sharif's assessment that the Muslims are too weak to take on the West. He has pejoratively labeled this school of thought the "*Inability Movement.*"[353]   This example illustrates the prime characteristic of these internal debates amongst Islamist extremists; they differ not about the fundamental principles of Salafi Islam but about their practical or rational application. That is why such debates, although worrying for Al Qaeda, are unlikely to shake its ideological foundation.

Reacting to 'Disinformation and Exaggeration'

Analysts and experts on Islamist groups have, according to al-Libi, accused Al Qaeda of having a constitution that "*calls for the killing of anyone who breaks away from it!*"[354] He accuses them of spreading blatant lies and asks, "*produce your proof.*" He claims that the broad thrust of the disinformation campaign against Al Qaeda is to paint it as a movement that kills Muslims and their religious leaders and destroys their wealth. It further attempts to depict it as a small, deviant, extreme, militant and harsh group, devoid of the "*mercy of Islam and its tolerance and leniency.*" He does not provide any evidential proof of Al Qaeda's practice of mercy, tolerance and leniency, merely rejecting the criticisms by stating that Al Qaeda's methods are based on "*well-founded Islamic*

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[352] Qur'an 2:286.
[353] Zawahiri. (2010, September 13). *A Victorious Ummah, A Broken Crusade: Nine Years After the Crusade Campaign.* Retrieved September 18, 2010 from Sitemultimedia: https://www.siteintelgroup.com/
[354] Op. Cit., Al-Libi, A. Y. (2007, September 9).

fundamentals and definite doctrinal contents." Subsequently, Al Qaeda spokesmen have attempted to disassociate themselves from some of the more controversial acts of violence. For example, Adam Gadahn denied responsibility for the Mina Bazaar bombing in Pakistan.[355] He attempted to shift the blame to the US contractor Blackwater.

Al Qaeda faces a public relations dilemma on the issue of targeting civilians. Al-Libi has urged "*Muslims to accept the idea of sacrificing the shield [human shield] and engage in a fierce war using weapons of mass destruction.*"[356] Having wedded itself to justifying the principle of targeting civilians, Al Qaeda finds itself in a difficult situation on such occasions. Its denials of responsibility are rarely accompanied by condemnation of the act of killing innocents or by pledges to find and punish the perpetrators. Its main defense is the absence of proof against it and the accusation of others.

Defending Ideology Against Religious Rulings (Fatwas)

Al-Libi accuses its opponents of employing, what Wittgenstein would have called, language games in their procurement of *fatwas* from compliant *shaykhs*. He complains that terms such as "bandits," "Kharajite," "Qaramites"[357] and "extreme fanatics" are used to paint Al Qaeda "*with allegations of treachery and treason.*"[358] He accuses these *shaykhs* of doing their governments' bidding and some of them of being behind the recantations in the prisons of Egypt and Saudi Arabia. By describing them as compliant and "*experts in perverting the source texts*" he aims to discredit them without having to confront the plethora of anti-Al Qaeda *fatwas* they have produced. Pointing to a long-standing invitation to these *shaykhs* to an "*open, public debate without conditions or restriction,*" al-Libi attempts to put the authors of the *fatwas* on the defensive.[359]

Following al-Libi's general concern over damaging *fatwas* against Al Qaeda ideology, Zawahiri chose the Ninth Anniversary of 9/11 video to condemn a little known *fatwa* issued that year.   The New Mardin Declaration[360] concluded that Ibn Taymiyyah's

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[355] On 8 October 2009 car bomb was detonated in the Mina Bazar (Market for women and children) in Peshawar, Pakistan. The bomb killed more than 100 people and injured more than 200.
[356] Brachman, J., & Warius, A. (2008). Abu Yahya al-Libi's Human Shields in Modern Jihad. *Sentinel , 1* (6), p. 3.
[357] The Qaramites were a Shia sect accused of extreme violence against the Arab, Sunni Muslims.
[358] Al-Op. Cit., Al-Libi, A. Y. (2007, September 9).
[359] Ibid.
[360] A Group of Muslim Scholars;. (2010). The New Mardin Declaration. *The New Mardin Declaration* (p. 4). Mardin, Turkey: http://www.mardin-fatwa.com/attach/Mardin_Declaration_English.pdf.

Mardin *fatwa*[361] could not be appropriated in the current context to charge Muslims with *kufr* (unbelief), to conduct rebellion, to commit acts of terrorism and behave treacherously against those bound by common citizenship (i.e attacks in the West by Muslims living in the West). It further abrogated Ibn Taymiyyah's classifications of the world into abodes, of peace, war and covenant, declaring instead the entire world as an abode "*of tolerance and peaceful co-existence.*"

Labeling and Discrediting

Zawahiri labeled the authors of the Mardin Declaration "*neo-Qadianis*"[362] and the Declaration as the creation of "*a new Qadianism in the Conference in Turkey.*"[363] Zawahiri brackets the Declaration within a broader trend of "*inability movements*" which are characterized by subservience to the West, corruption and theological compromise. The 'Qadiani' and 'inability' labels are further examples of "word games" used by Al Qaeda aimed at discrediting the Conference and its Declaration. He only engages indirectly with one point within the Declaration; that the context of Ibn Taymiyyah's fatwa no longer applies. Zawahiri subtly points out that these same movements "*permitted the Muslims to kill their Muslim brothers in Afghanistan in the ranks of the Crusader Americans and under their banner.*" The fatwa authors are discredited on the basis of their apparent political weakness and the content of the fatwa is addressed only briefly to demonstrate an apparent contradiction. The fact that the relatively obscure fatwa was mentioned at all shows how seriously Al Qaeda views theological and ideological criticism.

Reacting to Non-Jihadi and Democratic Islamic Movements

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[361] Ibn Taymiyya's Mardin fatwa is used by Islamist extremists like Al Qaeda to justify violence against fellow Muslims on the basis that their failings in observing the faith correctly mark them as apostates.

[362] 'Qadiani' is an informal and somewhat pejorative term for the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, an Islamic reformer, created the movement in 1889 in Qadian, India. His teachings on Jihad caused some controversy amongst the emerging militant Islamic movements because he declared that the need for an armed jihad to defend freedom of religion was unlikely in the modern world. He further interpreted Qur'anic teachings to demonstrate that Islam was a religion of peace, love and tolerance. He lost the support of most Muslim religious leaders when he declared himself the Messiah of Islam. In recent times, the Movement has been formally declared non-Muslim in Pakistan and has been ostracised by the vast majority of Islamic sects because of its founders claim to a particular aspect of prophethood. The Movement is particularly targeted by Islamist extremists who regard its followers as apostates, worthy of being killed.

[363] Zawahiri. (2010, September 13). *A Victorious Ummah, A Broken Crusade: Nine Years After the Crusade Campaign.* Retrieved September 18, 2010 from Sitemultimedia: https://www.siteintelgroup.com/

The fourth front in al-Libi's battle of ideas is against "*movements far removed from jihad*," "*with a democratic approach*" who adapt "*source texts*" to "*agree with the civilization, culture and methodologies of the West*," are portrayed as "*moderate, balanced, reasonable and civilized*" and are pushed by the West "*into ideological conflict with the Jihadist groups.*"[364] Al-Libi claims that the purpose of such groups is to separate the jihadis from the wider Muslim population and to occupy Jihadi groups with "*a torrential flood of ideas*," widely backed and publicized. He says nothing about how to confront these groups, assuming simply that identifying them as being "*far removed from Jihad*," "*democratic*" and 'Western backed' will suffice to discredit them. Again, word games rather than argumentation are used to confront a perceived ideological threat emanating from the vast majority of the Muslim world.

Isolation of the Jihadi Leadership from the Muslims

"*Killing, capturing, incapacitating or defaming the guiding Jihadi symbols*" is the description of the fifth front in the ideological battle. The effect of isolating these "*Jihadi symbols*," or iconic leaders, is to leave young and inexperienced followers "*without an authority in which they can put full confidence.*"[365] Al-Libi points to this threat too without offering a strategy or solution to prevent it. By implication, he reveals the importance of iconic leadership to Al Qaeda in terms of radicalizing the young through rhetoric.

Exaggeration of Disputes Within the Global Jihad

Finally, al-Libi identifies the exaggeration of some "*minor, interpretive disputes*" amongst the Jihadi community as a technique used by its enemies to "*fan the flames of differences, bandy about allegations and spread rumours.*" He concedes that this strategy can succeed in providing an "*incubator and safe haven for rumourmongers, deserters and demoralisers.*" He complains that when Jihadi leaders attempt to put the record straight, a biased media drowns out their voice. His ultimate defence is that this "war of ideas" is nothing new. It occurred during the life of the Prophet and al-Libi cites passages from the Qur'an to show that all prophets were subject to name-calling and slander and that the disbelievers would attempt to drown out the recital of the Qur'an to ensure their

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[364] Op. Cit., Al-Libi, A. Y. (2007, September 9).
[365] Ibid.

ideology remained buoyant. Again, al-Libi defence of Al Qaeda is not through argumentation but through association with religious history and symbology.

Conclusions

Al Qaeda employs terrorism in a symbolic and reflective sense. It claims that the West has inflicted terrorism on the Muslim world for decades and so it is responding in kind. Its acts of terrorism have to be as horrific as possible to compensate for the advantage it perceives the West has enjoyed in its ability to kill Muslims as well as to coerce it to disengage from the Muslim world. Al Qaeda recognises its attacks as 'speech acts' intended to make a political statement as well as claim moral equivalence but the message and claim appears not have been understood. Even when supplemented by textual or verbal explanations, the complex messages in Al Qaeda's symbolic rhetoric fail to convince its adversaries that its violence and ethics are a mere reflections of its adversary.

Exploring arguments using Toulmin's 'analytical' category is problematic and so Al Qaeda's statements are better analysed as 'substantial' arguments, which are 'historically situated' and rely on the 'evidence of experience.'   Differences in conceptions of history and the fact that communities learn to distrust each other means that Al Qaeda's rhetoric is more successful with Muslim communities than with the West.

Al Qaeda's arguments are frequently cloaked within a narrative that presents a mythical version of history, a selective contemporary reality and an ideal future. The grievance-based elements of the narrative reflect the political and social failure experienced by many Muslims while the promise of an Islamist solution has the advantage of not having failed like the alternatives of socialist, nationalist and secular options attempted. The narrative contains reoccurring components, which highlight the contemporary crisis, present it as part of a perpetual conflict between the Muslims and the disbelievers, stress the urgent need for action, declare it to be a religious obligation providing the primary route to personal salvation and one which is underwritten by God's promise of ultimate success for the Muslims. As such Al Qaeda's rhetoric is a fusion of specific versions of history, political analysis and theological interpretation.

Al Qaeda's statements are often rooted in the Arab fatwa tradition to give the impression of legal and logical authority. It usually addresses them to both a Western and Muslim audience. The resulting duality of audience and mixture of style detracts from its potential effectiveness, as points made to appeal to an Islamic audience can be off-putting to a Western mindset.

Statements usually begin with a scriptural quotation to establish religious authority before addressing pre-stated questions in a direct manner. Violence is a frequent and prominent topic and is justified as reflective action; 'we fight you because you attack us.' Terrorism and the killing of civilians receive frequent polemical treatment. What are essentially tactical decisions are given ethical justifications by claiming the right of reciprocity and challenging the concepts of 'civilian' and of 'innocent.' Al Qaeda's arguments are most vulnerable when it attempts to mask the 'strategic necessity' drivers for its ethical case with claims of theological obligation.

The West is criticised for alleged injustices, moral bankruptcy and hierocracy; it is invited to accept Islam to save itself. The purpose of these claims is to placate Islamists who feel it wrong to attack an enemy without warning it and inviting it joining the faith. At same time Al Qaeda exploits the Occidentalism myths that abound in certain Muslim communities. It also claims to speak for a mythical *ummah* a nation united by monotheism, motivated by honour and respect and capable of martyrdom or victory. These mythical identity constructions are crucial to its Manichean worldview and the decisive conflict at the centre of its conception of victory. That is why Al Qaeda makes no overtures of peace and its invitation for the West to accept Islam is deliberately unpersuasive; it anticipates, even invites, a rejection to strengthen its case for violent conflict.

Measuring Al Qaeda's impact on its audience through quantitative methods is misleading. Its rhetorical success is best assessed through its impact on world politics and the growth in its affiliate groups. A good understanding of its audience in these regions has played a large part in this. Al Qaeda however has revealed a poor understanding of Western audiences.

Debate, in what Al Qaeda recognises as 'a battle of ideas,' centres on the related issues of individual credibility and authority. Even when ideas are directly confronted the debate

rarely addresses the substantive elements of an argument but tends to focus on the number and reputation of the theologians cited by a particular side of the debate. This situation occurs because the theological premise is rarely in dispute. Instead it is the application of that premise in the particular conditions or environment that is the point of difference. Hence al-Sharif and Zawahiri argue not about the application of jihad against the West, in what is essentially a political rather than religious conflict, but they differ on where the West can be attacked and who can authorise such action.

As there is no objective measure of religious authority, Al Qaeda is able to find sanctuary in its right to propose an alternative view when it falters on the issue of credibility. Al-Libi states, "*it is never right for us to consider the retractions of the retracting ones.*" While accepting that the recantations are from "*the people of knowledge and precedent,*" he does not accept that this accords their "*statements a sacredness which makes them indisputable, with no room for critique, refutation and objection.*" Al Qaeda is therefore able to simultaneously invoke the authority of an individual when it accords with its view while rejecting the same individual's interpretation when it does not. By retreating to the 'sacredness' of scripture, Al Qaeda, is able to find text it can selectively use to support its actions.

Chapter Six: Rhetoric, Textuality and Political Style

Throughout this thesis rhetoric has been used in its conventional sense of verbal or textual communication linked to a message. Whilst rhetoric in that context accommodates social and personal characteristics of the individuals involved, such as credibility and charisma, it does not consider the notion of style. Hariman declares that: "*To the extent that politics is an art, matters of style must be crucial to its practice.*"[366] Political style, according to him, comprises the amalgam of "*sensibility, taste, manners, charisma, charm or similarly compositional or performative qualities in a particular political culture.*"[367]   Two points arise out of this definition of style.   Firstly, an individual's political style reflects the political genre to which the individual's politics belongs or the genre to which that individual is giving birth. All leaders borrow and blend elements of many political styles. For example, a politician may at the same time be a republican, a realist and display courtly behaviours and exploit bureaucratic techniques. By matching individuals' style to a range of political genres, components of their political ideology can be exposed and the relative priority attached to each can be determined.

Secondly, the qualities of style can be discerned through both composition and performance. The balance between composition and performance depends on a number of things including the relevant genre of politics. However, the most significant factor is the immediacy of the rhetoric. Performance is best witnessed. It can be recoded and relayed to those not present but there it drifts into the realm of composition. For an absent performance to be effective it needs to be rendered into a vivid narrative, requiring artful composition. Composition, especially textual composition, is therefore the primary source for analysing political style.

This chapter seeks to determine Al Qaeda's political style by employing Hariman's theory of a link between textual rhetoric and political style. It begins by exploring his ideas about textuality and rhetoric of the Courtly and the Bureaucratic styles to determine the extent and manner in which Al Qaeda exhibits these features in its ideology and conduct. It then attempts to expose elements of the Republicans and the

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[366] Op. Cit., Hariman, R. (1995). p. 3.
[367] Ibid. p. 3-4.

Realist styles within Al Qaeda's ideology. Hariman's Theories, or at least his application examples, appear to concentrate on Western state-centric models and so these limitations are briefly discussed before exploring a relevant alternative, the political style of modern terrorism. The textuality and political style of the modern terrorism genre is distilled from Karl Heinzen's 'Murder and Liberty' to determine particularly its link to realism and Al Qaeda, and how textuality is exploited to incite killing. Finally the fundamental difference between realism and revolutionary ideology is addressed by considering the crisis environment and narratives of Holy Violence

Rhetoric and Political Style

Hariman's Link Between Textuality and Political Style

"*A mixture of rhetorical designs, institutional customs and philosophical arguments*"[368] developed in a specific historical and cultural context, comprise Hariman's understanding of political style. He critically examined four classic texts to identify dominant political styles and explored the relationship between the rhetorical style of the text and the relevant political style.

Analysts examining political ideas and have tended to assume the texts that articulate them are merely mediums to communicate a reality or a theory. However, by appreciating subtle nuances of the art of rhetoric, Hariman gives appropriate weight to both the medium and the message. The importance of the medium, or in this case the text, lies in allowing the reader to imagine reality and to interpret events. Whilst Hariman's approach may be novel and effective, the application of his methodology is challenging. Political scientists can legitimately see language as a barrier because texts, especially traditional texts, contain 'fuzzy' or flowery language making text-based analysis a difficult skill to acquire. The modern preference is for a rigorous scientific discourse exploiting the predefined terminology of political science. The problem is neatly encapsulated by this statement: "*Rhetoric is thus problematic not because language and textuality "per se" are flawed but because rhetoric embodies in itself the errant and unreliable tendencies of natural language.*"[369]

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[368] Ibid. p.96.

[369] Crane, G. "Robert Hariman, Political Style: The Artistry of Power. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995. Pp. 259. Isbn 0-22-631630-0." *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*

Although Hariman concentrates on linking textuality to political style, he is actually attempting something broader in scope. A theory of social "intelligibility" that arises out of linking "*persuasive techniques, aesthetic norms and, political relationships*"[370] appears to be his ultimate aim. His choice of contemporary examples to illustrate deductions from the chosen classical texts is symptomatic of this. He links Oprah Winfrey and Madonna with the Emperor Pu Yi and Haile Selassie claiming that each one employs the courtly style. Similarly, Cicero, Thomas Jefferson, and Vaclav Havel are examples of republicans attempting to "*craft a persona emblematic of public life*"[371] That persona contributes to the rhetorical symbology considered appropriate to the language of republican discourse. By so doing, Hariman shows that although regime types may go out of fashion, political styles are essentially timeless; the modern world absorbs them under different guises.

Textual and Behavioural Rhetoric of the Courtly Style

Hariman uses Kapuscinski's *The Emperor* to depict the courtly style, which celebrates decorousness, hierarchies, and the sovereign. This style is rooted in the practice and rhetoric of ancient monarchies but Hariman can see its reflections in the public profile of modern institutions such as the American presidency. He does this by analysing "*conventions of courtly speech and conduct … independently of monarchical government or traditional social structures.*"[372] In particular, he considers how courtly tropes have been appropriated by modern mass media for entertainment and advertising. The courtly style is characterised by an explicit and prominent recognition that society is hierarchical and that individuals' status is determined by their rank within that hierarchy. That rank is often depicted visibly, through deportment for example and individuals and groups derive their authority and legitimacy by their link to the 'sovereign' through the system of hierarchy. Nearness to the sovereign or source of power is a key determinant of status and so proximity is strictly controlled through established protocols based on rank and position.

Al Qaeda has become explicitly antimonarchical and opposes the postcolonial social hierarchies that have evolved in Muslim states. It defines itself as egalitarian and

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[370] Ibid. p.6.
[371] Ibid.p.5.
[372] Op. Cit., Hariman, R. (1995). p.52.

recognises only Divine sovereignty. Obvious courtly behaviour therefore contradicts its self-image. Nevertheless, it has succumbed to a few implicit courtly stylistic practices. The most visible example is in Al Qaeda's media manipulation of bin Laden's image. He is variously depicted as a romantic horseman astride a black steed, a heroic warrior in combat clothing carrying an AK47 in the mountains of Afghanistan and, more recently, as a wise statesman in traditional robes issuing warnings and ultimatums from behind a desk. No other member of Al Qaeda is depicted with such a strong and majestic persona. The extent to which bin Laden or Al Qaeda's media managers are consciously crafting a princely identity is unclear. However, the effect is to depict a man who transcends the singular eminence of a political leader such as Zawahiri or a self-styled religious scholar such as Al Qaeda's Abu Yayha al Libi. Bin Laden's status rises above his comrades not because of his abilities as a politician, fighter or theologian but because of his mystical decorum; the ability to look, behave and articulate appropriately in all situations.

This highly visual construction of bin Laden's leadership image contrasts with the entirely verbal or textual creation of Mullah Omar as the supreme head of the jihad in Afghanistan. Omar is against having his photographs taken and even before security concerns he avoided public meetings. All this made courtly overtures nearly impossible. Although the Mullah has always maintained local political and military goals, it has suited Al Qaeda to promote him to position of symbolic leadership within the global jihad and to make itself subservient to him. Bin Laden and others always refer to him as *Amir ul Momineen*, Commander of the Faithful, a title that is not limited by geography and is subordinate only to a Caliph.[373] In many of their statements Al Qaeda leaders briefly pay homage to Mullah Omar as the Commander of the Faithfull but rarely, if ever, pass on or acknowledge any of his commands. Public expressions of loyalty and subordination to the Afghan leader are crucial to Al Qaeda's survival. Its leaders depend upon the highly developed sense of hospitality and asylum in Pushtoon culture for their protection. Through text and words rather than image and ritual, Al Qaeda has to construct a worldly representative of the Divine sovereign and to achieve proximity ideologically through deliberate and frequent expressions of loyalty.

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[373] This is contestable. When the first Caliph, Abu Bakr, gave over command of a Muslim expeditionary force to a young man of about twenty years of age, he formally sought the Commander's permission to remain behind when the force left for its campaign. This incident may be cited as precedence to indicate that in the situation of jihad the military commander has primacy over political leadership.

Having attributed sovereignty to God, Al Qaeda naturally allocates social status to those who show 'proximity' to the Divine. However, by adopting a highly marshal interpretation of religion, it is not moral or spiritual achievements that elevate individuals in society but their commitment and contribution to the conflict. The premier status is reserved for the martyr because he has paid the ultimate price for the cause and because he is now believed to be residing with the Sovereign and enjoying Divine pleasure. In this way courtly styles are adopted to allocate vicarious sovereignty to martyrs and to the Al Qaeda leadership who inspire them.

Hariman suggests that courtly culture is ultimately doomed because it "constricts adaptation and innovation" and because it privileges some and denies others.[374] Reactionary or revolutionary movements harness these grievances to precipitate the demise of the established order. In the case of the Haile Selassie regime, on which *The Emperor* is based, Kapuscinski charts the intrinsic weaknesses of the monarchy from the point of view of idealised Enlightenment solutions: "*the narrative of truth displacing power, reality overtaking appearance and reason replacing privilege.*"[375] This Enlightenment inspired attack on monarchies in Europe caused the decline of classical courtly institutions and has inspired attacks on monarchies or dictatorial regimes in other parts of the world.

Al Qaeda's narratives attempt to legitimate its claim to power through the authority of Islamic scripture, it conducts spectacular attacks to contrast its capability with the vast but impotent military arsenals of Muslim regimes and it argues that all Muslim regimes are self-serving and corrupt and that only through militant action against their backers, the West, will the situation be changed. Al Qaeda's existence is largely a reaction to the predominance of the courtly style in Islamic politics where power is apparently flaunted with ostentatious decorousness, hierarchies belong to a small elite and sovereignty is in the hands of dynasties or dictators. Its anti-courtly stance restricts the extent to which Al Qaeda can overtly exploit courtly tropes. Furthermore, it lacks the political infrastructure in which sovereigns, courts, rituals and other courtly features can

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[374] Op. Cit., Hariman, R. (1995). p.93-94.
[375] Ibid. p. 53-54.

influence its style. Political success is a perquisite for these to develop and that success has so far eluded Al Qaeda.

The Bureaucratic Style

The Castle by Kafka is used to illustrate the bureaucratic style; emphasizing institutions, procedures and officialdom. The style prioritises writing and is claimed to structure the daily life of Western peoples. Kafka illuminates an impersonal and bewildering bureaucracy, common in most modern states. His depiction of bureaucracy is not fiction. Durkheim and Weber also excluded personality in their theories of bureaucracy.[376] Bureaucracy appears to mark a distinction between leaders and followers. It is a political tool that can be used to order, control and dominate society. Understanding its particular utility in imposing political will, would be of relevance to forecasting the ideological trajectory of terrorist movements. Unfortunately, Hariman does not link the politics of totalitarianism with the necessity of bureaucratic control in, for example, the Nazi regime and Stalinist Russia, as Hannah Arendt does.[377] Many revolutionary and terrorist groups display totalitarian tendencies[378] but their scope to establish bureaucracies is limited by their ability to control space, establish organisational structures and their ability to freely communicate.

Modern intelligence gathering involving communication intercepts and aerial or satellite surveillance is highly effective against bureaucratic structures because of their reliance on fixed institutions and on communication. Al Qaeda's survival has depended upon its ability to minimise bureaucracy and to adapt its command and control methods from centralised to defuse semi-autonomous or autonomous groups and individuals. Its many statements, procedural manuals and occasional edicts issued via the internet or satellite television are examples of its minimalistic bureaucracy, aimed at facilitating its political objectives rather than controlling its members. Occasionally it is forced to issue guidance or directives that control behaviour, primarily for reasons of operational security. For example, Abu Yahya al-Libi issued a booklet on the subject of Muslim spies following the success of US drone attacks against Al Qaeda in Afghanistan. There must certainly have been strict systems for controlling access to bin Laden and Zawahiri. The

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[376] *DiRenzo*, G. J. (1974). *Personality and Politics*. New York: Anchor Press. 5.
[377] *Arendt, H. (1973). The Origins of Totalitarianism (2nd ed.). New York: Harcourt Brace &* Co.
[378] Although they do not necessarily go on to establish totalitarian regimes.

nature of this bureaucracy cannot be determined as it is necessarily secret but its existence and effectiveness is evidenced by the West's failure to discover the whereabouts of the terrorist leaders for about a decade. Controls must exist to prevent electronic devices being brought into proximity of key individuals and to regulate who has access to leaders and how that access is granted.

All of these elements of necessary bureaucracy are not visible to the outsider but can be inferred by the relative success in maintaining security. As such, they probably lack the features that cause them to be 'impersonal and bewildering' that Kafka uses to characterise the style. There are however a few rare glimpses of the tendency in discovered Al Qaeda financial documents. A captured letter apparently from al Zawahiri to a commander berates him over failings in a budget report:

> *"Noble brother Ezzat . . .*
>
> *Following are my comments on the summary accounting I received:*
> *With all due respect, this is not an accounting. It's a summary accounting. For example, you didn't write any dates, and many of the items are vague. The analysis of the summary shows the following:*
> *1. You received a total of $22,301. Of course, you didn't mention the period over which this sum was received. Our activities only benefited from a negligible portion of the money. This means that you received and distributed the money as you please.*
> *2. Salaries amounted to $10,085—45 percent of the money. I had told you in my fax . . . that we've been receiving only half salaries for five months. What is your reaction or response to this? ...."*[379]

The letter goes on at length pointing out failures to follow procedure, lack of attention to detail, inadequate or absent explanations and draws polite but critical conclusions about Ezzat's attitude to accountability and control. Underlying the letter is the message that Ezzat may well be in control of his operational activities but he has to answer to the bureaucracy of Al Qaeda's senior leadership. Bureaucracy may lack the glamour of jihad through physical combat but its importance and value must be recognised through the considerable financial authority delegated to it by the senior leadership. It is a vital instrument of command and control as well as maintaining security.

Al Qaeda and the Republicans

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[379] Zawahiri, Letter to Ezzat (real name unknown), February 11, 1999. Quoted in Aaron, D. (2008). *In Their Own Words Voices of Jihad.* Arlington: RAND Corporation. P.23.

Hariman selects Cicero's letters to Atticus as typical of the republican style. Republicans value oratory, consensus and civility as democracy's ideal style of debate to achieve their objectives of self-governance and civic virtues while attempting to mitigate private or commercial interests in politics. They are also highly moral; their actions being motivated through the imperative of the public good. These aspirations are achieved through institutions and public offices, all reliant on public debate.

To some extent Al Qaeda shares republican ideals. It aspires to self-governance and aims to forge a highly moral egalitarian community. The difference is in the value system of Western republicanism and that of Al Qaeda's Islamism. In the first case the ethical or moral value system is determined by the will of the people, albeit constitutionally fixed in liberalism, and in the second case the value system is embedded in Islamic scripture and its interpretation is de facto limited to scholars recognised by Al Qaeda as 'authoritative'. This imperative to restrict interpretation of the value system to an authoritative body close to the centre of power has driven other revolutionary movements, aspiring to republican ideals, towards totalitarianism once power was achieved. It is likely that Al Qaeda will also suffer the same fate should it ever establish a regime.

Oratory is the master art of the republican style that is "*explicitly argumentative yet also imbued with a strong sense of ... acoustic resonance that comes from speaking publicly and especially from speaking in such places as the Senate chamber.*"[380] Hariman here is not just describing the relationship between rhetoric and political style but also between the physical environment and rhetorical style. In the first ever televised presidential debate, between Nixon and Kennedy, Nixon persuaded those that heard the debate on radio but those that watched it on television favoured Kennedy. The debate clearly illustrated the critical relationship between oratory and the medium. Rhetoric persuasive in a public gathering is not necessarily persuasive in text. Similarly, political persona and style on the radio is different from the perception of the same politician depicted by television.

In the Internet age, rousing speeches emphasised with exaggerated gestures and booming oratory do not have the same resonance that they would in the Senate chamber. Instead, a more visual and controlled style has greater impact. Just as many

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[380] Op. Cit., Hariman, R. (1995). p.108

political broadcasts today support speeches with videos, Al Qaeda too intersperses its statements with video clips and stills to reinforce its rhetorical claims. Whilst it has adapted well to its primary communication medium, the Internet, Al Qaeda faces difficulty in ensuring that its statements are accessed in the vast sea of web-based information and, when seen, they are taken seriously. That requires it to remain in the public consciousness and so it reinforces statements with rhetorical acts of terrorism.

Republican argumentation is intrinsically linked to individual reputation and credibility. Opponents are expected to discredit and so their attacks can usually be dismissed as opportunistic or false. The greatest threat to reputation consequently comes from within, from notional friends. When Cicero was driven into exile following ridicule by an opponent he remarked, "*it was not enemies but jealous friends who ruined me*".[381] No doubt Margret Thatcher experienced similar sentiments following the attack on her leadership by Geoffrey Howe, which precipitated her downfall.[382] This over-sensitivity to criticism from within is evident in Al Qaeda's vitriolic response to Zawahiri's erstwhile theological mentor, Dr Fadl's recantation from Al Qaeda's doctrine. Zawahiri responded with an extensive tome containing a passionate, sometimes cynical, rebuttal of Fadl's arguments. These examples demonstrate the apparent vulnerability to attacks from within of individuals and political movements that rely on their personal credibility and rhetoric for power.

A significant difference between the republican style and Al Qaeda's is over the role of negotiation. For Cicero, "*republican politics involves conflicts of interest between classes and groups, but he emphasises how the political process is a means of bringing them together - the conditions for any successful negotiation have to be created in the act of negotiating.*"[383] Republican rhetoric plays a crucial role in creating the conditions necessary to bring people to the negotiating table and subsequently in enabling the process of negotiation such that all parties accept that they have achieved the best possible deal under the circumstances. The recognition that politics requires negotiation

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[381] Ibid. p.110.
[382] Geoffrey Howe's speech in the House of Commons on 13 November on the occasion of his resignation as Deputy Prime Minister was highly critical of Margret Thatcher's leadership style and is widely credited for setting in chain the series of events that led to Thatcher's resignation on 22 November 1990.
[383] Op. Cit., Hariman, R. (1995). p.110.

and that negotiation is a primary form of conflict resolution is strikingly absent in Al Qaeda's ideology.

In that respect Al Qaeda has a realist approach, certainly as Hegel understood it. International treaties and contracts abrogated state sovereignty, according to Hegel; "*the state proved its sovereignty through war, and not through negotiation.*"[384]   Al Qaeda declared war on its closest ideological cousins, the Bashir regime in Sudan and the Sharif regime in Somalia because both had negotiated with the West. Al Qaeda's strategic objective, the unconditional withdrawal of foreign forces from Muslim lands, negates the role of negotiation. It perceives negotiation as a form of compromise, and hence, weakness. This contrast arises out of Al Qaeda's application of the Islamic concepts of *shura* and *sharia*. *Shura*, meaning consultation, is the primary impetus for the republican tendencies of Al Qaeda. However, its desire to address issues through its singular interpretation of religious law, *sharia*, mitigates the scope and style of debate in comparison with western liberal democratic republicans who can argue on the basis of a wider range of ethical and legal assumptions. Entrenching political positions within the cloak of a sharia reduces the scope for compromise and negotiation. Compromise and negotiation are therefore not just signs of political weakness but are simultaneously signs of religious weakness because of an absolutist interpretation.

Even the smallest perception of weakness is greatly magnified because of the asymmetric balance of power between Al Qaeda and the West. The role of its rhetoric directed at the West is to convince it of Al Qaeda's seriousness and persistence as well as to highlight the cost to the West of continuing involvement in Muslim countries. Al Qaeda's rhetoric directed at Muslims attempts to convince them that it can and will destroy the West's will to engage in Muslim lands. Negotiation in such circumstances would weaken its constructed aura of success and belief in ultimate victory.

Hariman suggests that the "*republic is constituted in discourse*" and so it exits only as long as people articulate its existence. "*It is even endangered by silence, for without the continuing discussion of public duties, virtue could wane, citizens become distracted, forces*

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[384] Hegel, G. W. (1942). *The Philosophy of Right.* Oxford: Clarendon Press. Analysed in: Perinbam, B. M. (1982). *Holy Violence, The Revolutionary Thought of Frantz Fanon.* Washington, DC: Three Continents Press. P.17.

of change gather strength as political energies dissipated."[385] This constant need to rearticulate the mission, to re-inspire individual political duty and the crucial need to remain focused on the task is also evident in Al Qaeda's rhetoric. Although it has conducted only a handful of spectacular attacks in the nine years since its first attack on US soil, Al Qaeda's senior leaders typically make five or six statements a year and their junior lieutenants are even more productive in reiterating and repackaging the senior leadership's message. Those messages emphasise the mission to rid Muslim lands of the Western invaders, the obligation of jihad and the need to remain steadfast and avoid any suggestion of compromise. The difference is that, whereas republicans' rhetoric serves to constrain political reality within their ideological beliefs, Al Qaeda's rhetoric strives to depict political reality in terms of its ideological beliefs.

Al Qaeda and the Realist Style

For Hariman, Machiavelli's 'The Prince' typifies the realist style. The book reflects a world based on power calculations and emotional neutrality; it is the style of modern international politics. Traditional identification of realism has been based on a number of assumptions. For example, realists see the state as the primary actor; states compete as rational actors; states do not apply conventional norms of justice to interstate conflict. Ultimately, realists regard the gaining, preservation and spread of power as their objective and this becomes a cause of universal competition. Hariman's analysis avoids these list-based assumptions and instead examines text and language, linking both to style. This method is effective in analysing Machiavelli because he too relies solely on language and textual style to communicate his ideas rather than on some "scientific" truth theory or methodology.

"The Prince" has been described as belonging to "*a well established genre in which wise men offer public advice to princes.*"[386] The renaissance gave birth to many such texts and Hariman even traces the tradition to Isocrates' letter "*To Nicocles*". But what makes The Prince unique is the marginalization of past texts and this reflected the uniqueness (at the time) of the particular style of politics it advocates by, "*freeing those who would rule*

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[385] Op. Cit., Hariman, R. (1995). p.111.
[386] Crane, G. (1995, December 9). Political Style: The Artistry of Power. *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* .

from the constraints of eloquence"[387] or to *"liberate himself from textual consciousness."*[388] Hariman goes on to state that, for Machiavelli,

> "*the essence of his subject is something that is correctly communicated only through artlessness, he abjures explicit textuality because power is not itself textual. As rhetoric is extrinsic to reality, so power becomes objectified, something existing independently of language, texts, and textual authority.*"[389]

The claim is that realists must avoid an explicit rhetorical form as rhetoric belongs to the realm of the abstract whilst their authority is grounded in the "real" world. Although Hariman does not express it in these terms, he is also claiming that power must be self-evident to be effective. Power that requires articulation is weak. Also power assumes authority and authority need not justify it self. This is reflected in the realists' ethical stance; might is right. It comprehensively allows the use of force and so requires little further justification.

Most significantly, however, Machiavelli's break from textuality reflected the "spirit of the age". It marked the formal break of political power from the Church's highly textual theology that had permeated virtually all European texts. The political power of the Catholic Church had been weakened in large part by a textual attack on its theology. The resulting Enlightenment age allowed the textuality of theology to be replaced by the textuality of political philosophy and science.

Al Qaeda's inherited its ideological break from the past through Islamist ideologues such as Maududi who conceived of theocratic Islam and Khomeini who implemented its first manifestation. Al Qaeda continues the process started by Islamist ideologues to reinterpret its concept of the past and its theological text to achieve its contemporary political objectives. It needs to refer to texts in order to claim that Al Qaeda alone is correctly interoperating theology. In so doing it is forced to critically analyse the discourse of other Muslims and reject their arguments in favour of its own. Al Qaeda further needs to justify its actions against the current world order. All this requires an abundance of rhetoric, much of which is textual. These textual expressions of power

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[387] Op. Cit., Hariman, R. (1995). p.24
[388] Ibid. p.23.
[389] Ibid. p.24.

according to Hariman are *"checked, relational, circumscribed by the exigencies of being heard by an audience or understood by a reader, and always awaiting a reply."*[390]

By Hariman's criterion of political style Al Qaeda cannot be a realist movement because it espouses power through ideology, which in turn, is textual. This reliance on rhetoric and textuality, according to Hariman, mean its power will remain checked and it will be exercised primarily as a discourse. Machiavelli instead subordinates ideology to power. His realist imagines power in an existing or expanded state:

> "*When power is understood in terms of vision it is unchecked, expansive, requiring only the movement of the person seeing to acquire the means for complete control of the environment. Machiavelli is comprehensible as the exponent of the modern state not because he described the state but because he composed a discourse capable of carrying the expansive potential in state power.*"[391]

Continuous acquisition of power for its own sake is a perpetual pursuit of realists.   For revolutionaries power is necessary because it has been denied. It is acquired to fulfil a vision of establishing an ideology that has yet to be realised. The revolutionary too must compose "*a discourse capable of carrying the expansive potential*" of his revolutionary vision, especially when that vision is global. The lack of a detailed analysis of the rhetorical style of revolutionary politics renders Hariman's otherwise insightful theory incomplete.

Machiavelli's textual style endorses self-assertion between political states by separating morality from statecraft or emphasising the use of force. Hariman also sees his contempt for textuality as an indication of self-asserting political discourse within modern political states:

> "*Machiavelli's technique of denigrating other political texts as texts, necessarily alienated in a material world, has become a rhetoric of self-assertion that now is reproduced endlessly. So it is that diplomats can denigrate human rights as slogans, corporate executives can dismiss worker-safety laws as bureaucratic red-tape, and journalists can debunk political speech as mere rhetoric. In every case, understanding the modern age requires reading Machiavelli not only as the proponent of self-*

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[390] Ibid. p.41.
[391] Ibid.

assertion for the few fortunate enough to have "lo stato" within their reach, but also as the modern writer schooling all of us to attain self-assertion by overruling our texts."[392]

This anti-textual or anti-rhetorical feature of realist politics, that predominate international relations, means that realist political systems tend to ignore or fail to engage with the rhetoric of rival political styles. That is why Al Qaeda's statements are rarely responded to and why its considerable communication efforts have so far failed to illicit any meaningful dialogue with the West.

Cynicism is a major motive for disregarding political rhetoric. This cynicism arises out of the dual approach to morality in political calculations. The realist adopts Machiavelli's amoral attitude to political decisions but has to construct a moral argument to enact his will over an adversary. A realist political leader needs to present his followers with a moral argument for conflict even if that argument is based on the simple premise of racial or national supremacy. Western regimes, predominantly practicing highly moral republican politics in the domestic sphere and amoral realist politics in the international sphere, can produce a moral rhetoric that contradicts reality. The apparent contradiction, or hypocrisy, of political will presented as subordinate to moral principle, rather than the reverse, causes a cynical attitude to political rhetoric that leads to the widespread desire for self-assertion to which Hariman refers. Al Qaeda too asserts itself in response to what it perceives as double standards. It, for example, claims that the West champions human rights at home but supports regimes in the Muslim world that denies them to their own people.

Decorum and the Limitations of Hariman's Theories

The 'appropriateness' criterion in decorum dictates that a fitting range of styles must satisfy the diversity of an audience. Cicero saw it as an all-encompassing code: "*the universal rule, in oratory as in life, is to consider propriety.*"[393] This challenges the rhetorical range of the political leader. As Cicero said, "*any situation can be reduced to a means of persuasion, but the difficulties of tending to many audiences requires a personality simultaneously stable and flexible.*" It is easier for individuals to develop effectiveness within a particular political style rather than across styles. Hariman's four

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[392] Crane, G. (1995, December 9). Political Style: The Artistry of Power. *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* .
[393] Quoted in Ibid. p.106

chosen styles belong primarily to the Western political tradition. Even the Selassie case study for the courtly style has much Western influence because Selassie attempted to model himself as a Western monarch. Current Western Liberal democracies contain elements of all four styles: they tend to be republican regimes; they employ policies, especially foreign policies, based on realism; their leadership frequently adopts courtly attitudes and their state apparatus is bureaucratic. What varies between individual regimes and leaders is the relative mix of these stylistic traits.

Although non-Western regimes employ elements of all these styles too, any differences in their manifestation from the West have not been explored. Totalitarianisms, oligarchies and tribal or clan influences on political style and rhetoric have not been fully researched and so the effectiveness of the rhetoric associated with these styles when communicated to other political cultures cannot easily be judged by Hariman's theories. Of greater significance is that his work cannot be directly mapped onto revolutionary movements and, specifically, to terrorist groups. As the analysis above has shown, Al Qaeda employs to varying degrees elements of all the above political styles but are there other stylistic characteristics evident in the literature of revolutionary terrorists? Alex Houen adopts a similar approach to Hariman when he considers the extent to which writers use stylistic strategies to "*represent, mediate and sometimes even practice terrorism.*"[394] Therefore, it is worth adapting Hariman's textual analysis techniques to assess if they can illuminate similarities and differences between Al Qaeda and the wider modern terrorism genre.

Textuality and the Political Style of Modern Terrorism

By its very nature, revolutionary ideology defines itself against the status quo and prizes novelty. It is not a regime type but a transient state between regime types. Although it promises to deliver utopian ideals, its articulation of those ideals is less clear than its articulation of the failures of the existing system and how to change it. Not only do revolutionary ideologies aim to deliver change but also they themselves evolve over time. The initiation of modern terrorism in the 19th Century was accompanied by fiction and non-fiction literature articulating the concept of evolutionary terrorism and its utility in delivering a political revolution. Embedded within the text of those

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[394] Houen, A. (2002). *Terrorism and Modern Literature: From Joseph Conrad to Ciaran Carson.* New York: Oxford University Press. P.18.

publications should be found, using Hariman's techniques, the implicit political style of revolutionary terrorists.

Heinzen, Realism and Al Qaeda: The Textuality of Killing

Karl Heinzen's article, *Murder and Liberty*, is credited with being the "*most important ideological statement of early terrorism*"[395] and so qualifies as the foundational text of modern terrorism in a similar manner way that *The Prince* does for realism. The difference in these two political styles is immediately apparent at the beginning of both texts in they way each addresses power. In *The Prince,* Machiavelli writes:

> "*May I trust, therefore, that your Highness will accept this little gift in the spirit in which it is offered; and if your Highness will deign to pursue it, you will recognize in it my ardent desire that you may attain to that grandeur which fortune and your own merits presage for you*."[396]

Whilst *The Prince* begins with a humble submission from the author, a subject of the sovereign, *Murder* begins with a cynical taunt by its author, a European exile, to his erstwhile kings. Heinzen writes:

> "*Even if the all-powerful masters of Europe allow themselves to be convinced that if they should succeed in dispelling the fugitives from England [that their problems are solved], they will not be rid of their enemies. -At any rate, it is self-evident that the reproduction of this brochure is possible in all of Europe's printing presses.*"[397]

Heinzen "*departs from accepted notions of decorum in his complete degradation of European monarchs*" by referring to them as "criminal," "bandits," and "murderers."[398] Like Machiavelli, Heinzen is attempting to create a new political style. To do so, both men create a novel literary paradigm. While Machiavelli indirectly expressed disdain for the past by ignoring the need to justify power through textuality, Heinzen expresses disdain for his contemporary political system more directly through textuality. Much of Al Qaeda's text lives within Heinzen's paradigm of scorn and contempt for existing power structures. Hate-based rhetoric is evidently an integral part of terrorist ideology. For example Zawahiri has this to say about President Bush:

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[395] Laqueur, W. (1979). *The Terrorist Reader*. London. p. 47.
[396] Machiavelli, N. (2008). *The Prince*. (L. Ricci, Trans.) Lulu. p.2.
[397] Heinzen, K. (1853). *Murder and Liberty*. New York: Self-Published by Author. Translation in Op. Cit., Bessner, D., & Stauch, M. (2010). p.153.
[398] Op. Cit., Bessner, D., & Stauch, M. (2010). p.144.

> *"I say to him {President Bush}: You pathological liar, you were lying when you entered Iraq, you are lying when you are being defeated in Iraq, and you will be lying when you leave Iraq."[399]*

Zarqawi, who personified the ideology of hate more than any other Al Qaeda leader, had this to say about Jordan's monarch:

> *Your [Jordan's King Abdullah II] star is fading. You will not escape your fate, you descendant of traitors. We will be able to reach your head and chop it off."[400]*

The realist sees power as something to be held in awe and supported. Revolutionaries have a paradoxical attitude to power. They despise power and the powerful. Power needs to be destroyed and their goal is to disperse it amongst the masses. However, they need power to achieve their goal. Once achieved, they need power to prevent a return to the former regime or to prevent another revolution. They consequently both despise and yearn for power.

The very act of textual criticism of existing authority exposes its weakness and expresses the potential power of the revolutionary. That is why ideological text articulating the failures of existing regimes are an almost universal prerequisite to revolution. Machiavelli addresses only the sovereign throughout his book. Heinzen speaks both to sovereigns and to the masses. Machiavelli describes how best to wield power but feels no need to offer justification for it. Heinzen expends text on both how to gain power and how to justify the inevitable killing involved. Realist rhetoric is therefore singular. It is expressed through power and is communicated primarily to potential adversaries. Revolutionary rhetoric has a duality. It is communicated to both existing power blocks and to future inheritors of power, the masses. It is also expressed through both a persuasive case for killing and through the act of killing itself. The revolutionary political style consequently relies more on textuality than the realist style; giving it elements of the republican style.

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[399] Interview, al-Sahab, September 11, 2005e, trans. MEMRI, "Al-Qaeda Leader Ayman Al-Zawahiri's interview to Al-Sahab (Part IV): I Call Upon Americans to Join Islam. The Torah and the New Testament Are Distorted. We Will Continue to Attack the US Until Our Prisoners Are Released," TV Monitor Project, Clip No. 957, December 7, 2005. As of October 10, 2006: http://memritv.org/Transcript.asp?P1=957

[400] Audio (purported), November 18, 2005i, Halaby, Jamal, Associated Press (AP), "Al-Zarqawi Threatens to Kill Jordan's King: Purported al-Zarqawi Tape Threatens to Kill Jordan's King Abdullah II and Bomb More Hotel Sites, ABC News, November 18, 2005. As of November 2, 2006: http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory?id=1326396

Explicit discussion of killing in the texts of terrorists marks a distinctive feature of its political style. Machiavelli mentions the word 'kill' or 'killing' between 7-10 times in his entire book (depending upon translation). Heinzen on the other hand deals almost exclusively with killing. Like Machiavelli, he is direct in addressing his particular subject. His Article begins by listing the vocabulary of killing:

> "*kill, slay, murder, shoot, strike dead, poison, remove from this world, deport to Cayenne, do away with, behead, strangle, put down, allow to jump over the knife, fusillade, imprison for life, execute and so forth.*"[401]

It continues by challenging assumption about what is considered acceptable killing and what is not, before making the case that "*murder is the chief instrument of historical progress*". Conrad, in *The Secret Agent,* also explores this theme of murder and killing, amongst other traits of modern terrorism.[402]

Realist politics depends upon political power, which is ideally based on deterrence. Killing is only necessary to establish and maintain the deterrence. In those circumstances killing is largely impersonal, carried out as a mass activity between men in armies in an atmosphere of mutual anonymity. There is little need to present a moral case for killing in those circumstances – whatever the cause or aim of the conflict, when combat begins between conventional armies it is a case of kill or be killed.[403] A terrorist takes the initiative to kill, usually on an individual basis, others who at the time are not presenting a threat to him. He needs to be ideologically fortified with a 'moral' argument to kill in such an intimate and aggressive way.

When Hariman speaks of power being "*objectified*" for the realist and being "*something existing independently of language, texts, and textual authority,*" he is working on the premise that power is already possessed and need only be defended or expanded. For the revolutionary, power is *the* objective. Why it should be achieved and how it should

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[401] Op. Cit., Bessner, D., & Stauch, M. (2010).p.154.

[402] Conrad, J. (1983). *The Secret Agent: A Simple Tale.* Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

[403] "most participants in close-combat are literally 'frightened out of their wits.' Once the arrows or bullets start flying, combatants stop thinking with the forebrain (which is the part of the brain that makes us human) and thought processes localize in the midbrain, or mammalian brain, which is the primitive part of the brain that is generally indistinguishable from that of a dog or a rat". This stimulates a self-defence response making killing 'instinctive'. See, Grossman, D. (not known). *Behavioral Psychology and a Resistance To Killing*. Retrieved June 3, 2010 from www.killology.com: http://www.killology.com/art_beh_problem.htm. Fuller discussion at Grossman, D. (1996). *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society* . Boston: Little Brown and Company.

be achieved need to be articulated before the objective of power can be reached. While the possession and expansion of power may be independent of textual authority its attainment is highly textual because the need to grab it and the means for doing so have to be argued.

It is for these reasons that Heinzen presents much of his text as a monologue addressed to an imaginary "judge" or "lieutenant". He is making an argument for just cause and for the exercise of power. The cause is the abuse of power by monarchs; the ethical case is based on what might be described as "equitable evil" or retribution; regimes commit murder in their exercise of power and so the revolutionary terrorist has the right to do the same. Indeed, qualitatively their murder must be more horrific for it to compete with the quantitative advantage that the regime armies have in their ability to kill.

For Heinzen the most glorious killing is suicide. It is the ultimate act of violence and devotion to the cause by an individual, especially if it is in response to *"disgrace that would destroy his character."*[404] This acceptance of the idea of self-destruction and the need to create greater terror with fewer deaths allows easier acceptance of the idea of what Conrad refers to as any *"act of destructive ferocity so absurd as to be incomprehensible, inexplicable almost unthinkable; in fact, mad?"*[405] Al Qaeda inherited the glorification of death and the idea of suicide bombings from the intellectual history of modern Islamism. According to the Muslim Brotherhood, Allah grants a "noble life" only to a nation that *"knows how to die a noble death."*[406] Death is an art (*al mawt fann*), and to achieve victory Muslims must prefer it to life. Al Qaeda further inherited the tactic of suicide bombings from the Shia Islamists' use in the Iran Iraq war and in Lebanon via the Suni led Palestinian resistance. None of these movements recognize the label of suicide, as that is a grave sin in Islam. The term 'Martyrdom operation' is used instead but the deliberate acceptance of death during an operation has to be justified by copious and repeated reference to texts of the medieval scholar, Ibn Taymiyyah. Heinzen is able to glorify suicide as an act of terror in just a short paragraph because he needs no justification in his ethical tradition.

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[404] In Op. Cit., Bessner, D., & Stauch, M. (2010). p. 155.
[405] Op. Cit., Conrad, J. (1983). p.31-32.
[406] Mitchell, R. P. (1969). *The Society of the Muslim Brothers.* London: Oxford University Press. p.206-207.

Both Heinzen and Conrad confront their readers with the brutal reality of killing, actual or imagined, in order to prepare them to contemplate the act themselves. Heinzen, in particular, stresses to readers that history is written in blood and that they, like their forefathers, will be murdered by rulers and clergy in their bid to retain power and so have no choice but to murder to gain their freedom. He uses textual techniques to desensitise the readers' normal psychological aversion to the act of killing. After presenting a litany of murder as the primary instrument of tyranny he moves to the motive for rebellion, revenge. Three paragraphs end with that word. One mention concludes the first, the second ends with it repeated twice and the third achieves a crescendo with, "*Revenge*! *Revenge*! *Revenge*!" He follows this with repeated emphasis on the word '*blood*':

> *"Blood is their alpha and blood is their omega, blood their end and blood their means, blood their desire and blood their life, blood their dream and blood their aspiration, blood is their principle and blood must be their end."*[407]

Just as Machiavelli objectifies power through the absence of mitigating textuality, so Heinzen objectifies murder and revenge through staccato repetition of a deliberately terrible and emotive vocabulary while avoiding the use of phrases that might suggest a non-violent resolution of crises.

Heinzen's "ferocious language" reflects the environment of political crises that prompted him to create a new political paradigm. He was affected by "*the brutal repression of revolutionary elements after the failed revolutions of 1848*"[408] The aim of that repression was to deter individuals from revolting. By graphically confronting the horror of killing and blood, Heinzen simultaneously removes fear from the regimes' violence and increases the attraction for the prospective revolutionary terrorist to commit the same in the name of revenge. Al Qaeda's ideological texts adopt similar techniques but are more discursive because they detail a greater range of grievances, provide a strategic framework within which followers can believe in a global victory and provide a more elaborate ethical case for retribution.

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[407] Heinzen, K. (1853). *Murder and Liberty*. New York: Self-Published by Author. From Op. Cit., Bessner, D., & Stauch, M. (2010). p.160.
[408] Op. Cit., Bessner, D., & Stauch, M. (2010). p.148.

Emphasis on violence has always existed in Al Qaeda's texts but it was constrained by the paucity of theological texts justifying it and the plethora reference to mercy and beneficence in Islamic scripture. However, violence in texts has become more prominent and graphic as the War on Terror created an increasingly severe environment for Al Qaeda. Relentless US bombing and ground-based operations by the Pakistan Army evidently created war wariness in Al Qaeda members. Abu Yahya al-Libi, a senior leader and preacher, likens the situation to an event in early Islamic history, "*after a month of severe besiegement, along with tremors of fear, pangs of hunger and severe cold, surrounded by the enemy.*"[409]   He links this with a verse of the Qur'an that echoes the situation:

> *"When they came upon you from above you and from below you, and when the eyes grew wild and the hearts reached to the throats, and when you were harbouring doubts about Allah. There, the Believers were tried and shaken with a mighty shaking." (Al-Ahzab: 10-11)*

Al-Libi then takes his followers' mind off their plight by graphically representing images of killing for them to emulate by asking them to imagine his interpretation to a controversial incident involving the execution by Muslims of male members of the Jewish Banu Quraidhah tribe. He writes:

> *"Imagine that the mass killing of the men of Banu Quraidhah was being broadcast to you live … You see a Jewish man with a white beard, his braids hanging, who has descended from the fort, eyes widened, dragging his feet, as he is being driven to his death while he is watching. His hands are tied with a rope, and a Companion takes him by his arm, pulling him to the place where his neck will be struck. He is made to stand at the edge of a ditch, dug specifically for this purpose. Then you see that a Companion with his slicing sword now stand by his side. He raises his sword and strikes him with a blow to his neck which cuts off his head, rolling into the ditch, blood flying everywhere. His body falls on to the heap of other bodies. Imagine it like this, as if you were watching every single event!"[410]*

Al-Libi continues with a vivid account of the execution of a young Jewish boy and explains that the purpose of portraying the event in this manner is that "*you will find that you have uncovered feelings.*" He claims that it arouses secret emotions that "*you would never have known nor felt if you merely read*" a report that men were executed and

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[409] Al-Libi, A. Y. (2010, February 24). Quraidhah and America - a Breeding Ground for Treachery and a Fountain of Evil. *A Document Posted on the Al-Fajr Media Centre* .
[410] Op. Cit., Al-Libi, A. Y. (2010, February 24).

the women and children taken captive.[411]   The contemporary example of Muhammad al-Durrah, the Palestinian boy whose fatal shooting by the Israeli Army was recorded by TV news crews,[412] is an example al-Libi uses of how the visual impact of one young death outstripped the reported deaths of hundreds of Palestinian children because it had the capacity arouse people. He appeals to his readers to "*try to picture*" such "*events as if they see it, and they must live them as if they are*" experiencing the situation in their own midst.

This understanding of the need to provide a textuality of history that goes beyond a mere record of events to one that is deliberately intended to vividly "*arouse unknown secrets within*"[413] the reader is a style Al Qaeda has in common with Heinzen and other terrorist ideologues. It is a rhetorical device intended to incite the anger and hate necessary to commit mass murder in the name of a higher calling.   Heinzen's litany of European history seen through the prism of murder is also punctuated by his subliminal appeal to the reader to visualise the narrated injustices; "*we now have them in front of us, the representatives of murder in all forms. There they stand and await our judgement and our determination.*"[414]   Heinzen's and Al-Libi's texts are intended to arouse indignation and anger. The appeals to visualise the readers' ability to judge and to kill are intended to incite action and revenge.

Both ideologues reveal that the primary motive of this graphic textuality is to psychologically prepare their followers for the harsh realities of the political world. Al-Libi follows his vivid depictions of the Quraidhah executions by explaining that these matters are "*related to foreign policy and its discipline require strong-heartedness and firmness in decision-making*" so that leaders do not "*become indecisive in times of disaster, and confused in gloomy times, mixing soft feelings with hidden weaknesses.*"[415]   Heinzen declares that it is his objective to "*annihilate the 'moral' qualms, through which*" men are "*frightened away from decisive action – even when they have an unfettered opportunity to do so. It was my object to bring honour to and make legitimate the goals of revolution, as*

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411 Ibid.

412 Muhammad al-Durrah was apparently shot and killed in the Gaza Strip on September 30, 2000, during rioting in the Palestinian territories. Jamal al-Durrah and his 12-year-old son, Muhammad, were filmed by Talal Abu Rahma, a Palestinian cameraman freelancing for France 2, as they sought cover behind a concrete cylinder after being caught in crossfire between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian security forces.

413 Al-Op. Cit., Al-Libi, A. Y. (2010, February 24).

414 Op. Cit., Bessner, D., & Stauch, M. (2010). p.161.

415 Op. Cit., Al-Libi, A. Y. (2010, February 24).

well as the means of revolution – even assassination."[416]   The revolutionary terrorists' political style therefore is a critical one that graphically confronts its audience with the political and human horrors of the world to make hate, revenge and killing necessary virtues of the individual.

Heinzen not only honours the means of revolution but also teaches them. Although Cicero talks about the importance of the primary instrument of republicanism, discourse, he does so in a largely theoretical sense. Similarly, Machiavelli's advice to his Prince on political manoeuvres is largely conceptual. Heinzen's advice on terrorism as an instrument of revolution is highly practical and is illustrated by examples. He was amongst the first to advocate the use of terrorism as a tactic in asymmetric warfare; he unashamedly encouraged mass murder and identified the potential for technology to facilitate terrorism. He ends his book with fictional illustrations of five different terror attack methods presented in the form of newspapers reports.[417]

Heinzen used the device of fictional newspaper reports because the journalistic style allows more scope for graphical and emotive text. He had of necessity to be fictional and textual but Al Qaeda has an increasing library of actual terrorist actions filmed by news companies and by its own media personnel. It uses graphics and videos from such events in most of its public statements, sometimes, even as a means of supplementing textual statements from its leaders. Notwithstanding, the difference in their use of media, Al Qaeda's purpose in visualising terrorism is the same as Heinzen's: to inform and inspire practical action in support of a revolution through terrorism.

The Crisis Environment and the Narrative of Holy Violence

The most significant difference in style between Heinzen and Machiavelli stems from the fact that Heinzen was reacting to a social and political crisis in 19th Century Europe and Machiavelli was exploiting an opportunity offered up by the Enlightenment. Freed from

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[416] Op. Cit., Bessner, D., & Stauch, M. (2010). p. 165.

[417] The first is a report of an explosive attack on a train carrying the German royal family. The second report claims that Guerrillas had developed a projectile that when fired at a target, sprays a rain of poison shot. In the fictional incident, the shot resulted in the death of fifty of the emperor's hunters. The deployment of "bomb-like shells" placed "beneath the pavement unknown to the enemy" is described in the third fictional news report. The 'newspaper' describes the alleged successful use of the technique by revolutionaries against the army in a remarkably prescient manner, given the events in Iraq and Afghanistan involving Improvised Explosive Devices (IED). The fourth illustrative report describes assignations in churches of key figures using air guns firing poisoned bullets. The final report describes the bombing of Louis Napoleon's palace using a time bomb that killed his entire court.

the Catholic Church's political influence in Europe cloaked in morality and the intellectual censorship of the clergy, Machiavelli was at liberty to postulate a new amoral power-driven political ideology. His literary style consequently reflected a dispassionate 'business case' and methodology to satisfy a perennial occupation of his princes: the need to maintain and expand their grip on power.

Heinzen's target audience was gripped with fear and indignation caused by the ruling classes. Their initial reaction, in the form of revolutions, had failed and failure had increased their reasons for fear. Heinzen had therefore to capture their attention by tapping into the prevalent emotion of the time: fear of tyranny and death. He had to convert their fear into anger, anger into hate and hate into revenge. Overcoming fear required persistent confrontation of killing, of murder and of blood. Hate required a singular interpretation of history as a litany of blood-soaked tyrants. It required also the discrediting of Christianity's restraining ethical influence over society by showing that its claim to be a "*religion of love and peace*" was a mockery and that the papacy had been guilty of sanctifying "*everything ungodly that wickedness could conceive and barbarism could perform.*"[418] This point required a particular interpretation of history to make the claims, that the Crusades "*were nothing more than the funeral processions of many millions of believers to their own graves,*" and that when the "*murder ledger of history*" is consulted "*we find most acts of murder on the account of Christianity.*"[419] This dislocation from the Christian value system is a characteristic feature of revolutionary movements described by Perinbam, of marking a break from the existing ethical framework and the construction of their own 'superior' system. She states that such groups:

> *"… usually adopt antinomian attitudes. Intent on pulling down an old order, they rid themselves collectively from encumbrances in the existing or restraining moral order and, in turn, create the new. Once beyond morality, they frequently forge new terms, a new vocabulary, sometimes even a new language, to describe themselves, their new values, and of course 'enemy.'"[420]*

Al Qaeda and Islamist extremist cannot so easily dislocate their ideology from Islam's ethical framework and so they have to argue for a particular violent interpretation and argue against moderating and conciliatory interpretations. Whilst they occasionally

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[418] Op. Cit., Bessner, D., & Stauch, M. (2010). p. 161.
[419] Ibid. p. 157.
[420] Perinbam, B. M. (1982). *Holy Violence, The Revolutionary Thought of Frantz Fanon.* Washington, DC: Three Continents Press. P.10.

adapt Heinzen's style by blaming 'moderate' Islam for the deaths of thousands of Muslims, the bulk of their textual effort is directed at perpetuating the myth that Muslims are being killed and enslaved because they have neglected the duty of jihad and that Islamic teaching encourages violence as a necessary means of individual and collective salvation for Muslims. Like Heinzen's myth that Christianity and all regimes are based on murder could only have had traction in the crisis environment arising out of failure of conventional political responses, the Islamist myth of a primordial conflict between Islam and a Judeo-Christian alliance also was only possible after Islamic monarchical, nationalist, socialist and democratic responses had failed to arrest the decline in Muslim power. The revolutionary political style can only sprout in the soil of political and social failure.

The need to challenge existing ethical norms and to propose alternative justifications of violence invariably leads to the idea of holy violence, even in non-religious ideologies. For example, Franz Fanon never used the term 'holy' to describe his ideas of anti-colonial revolutionary violence in Algeria but his writings clearly indicate a spiritual dimension. Fanon's idea of violence "*went beyond the "rational,""* it had the "*powers capable of changing people and societies for the better.*"[421] The idea of holy violence as a spiritual necessity and as a means of individual and societal improvement is a myth that requires articulation in the context of the revolutionary cause. It is not new. In 1830 Bianco published a *Handbook for Revolutionary Bands*. The revolutionary for him is the "*citizen who, animated by a sacred enthusiasm, freely dedicates his life and possessions to his country.*"[422] Bianco's 'sacred enthusiasm' converts ideological killing into a saintly, heroic, and self-sacrificing moral activity.

Holy violence can go beyond giving moral purpose to killing and death, it can be an expression of love and a source of happiness. The revolutionary fighter, according to Bianco is:

> *"imbued with the pure joy that gladdens the life of one devoted to a good cause; with the ardent and clear-sighted valor of a man who feels a love for humanity and for what is just and true; and with the*

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[421] Ibid. p.8.

[422] O'Sullivan, N. (1986). *Terrorism, Ideology & Revolution - The Origins of Modern Political Violence.* Brighton: Wheatsheaf Books Ltd. P.11-12.

disinterestedness by which virtuous souls hold it a duty to sacrifice everything to the realization of a sublime idea for the good of mankind."

Heinzen employs the idea of terrorism as a means of human progress, an idea echoed by Sayyid Qutb a century later and absorbed by many Islamist militants including Al Qaeda. Heinzen even expropriated the religious lexicon of martyrdom to describe the revolutionary, albeit he uses it mostly in the negative sense of the revolutionary who fights in a conventional manner and dies a wasted death at the hands of superior forces. The myth of holy violence needs extensive and repeated articulation through speech, making ethical, narrative and mythical elements of textuality critical to revolutionary terrorism. The revolutionary terrorist therefore claims a moral cause for the good of mankind and his violent actions, a means of personal and collective salvation.

Al Qaeda's ideology interweaves the need to create a permissive ethical framework for terrorism with narratives to highlight injustices, to identify the perpetrators and to create hate-based animosity in a similar, albeit more elaborate, way to Heinzen's. Al Qaeda's ideological inheritance is greater than Heinzen's, partly accounting for the elaborate nature of its rhetoric. Its rhetoric is comparatively more textual because it needs to reiterate the corpus of intricate political, social and theological arguments produced by centuries of scholars as well as articulate its own arguments. Houen is unusual in identifying that revolutionary terrorists have to address the "*interface of terrorist violence and textuality, negotiating the divide between the "visceral" reality of terrorism and discursive aspects of its representation.*"[423] Both Heinzen and Al Qaeda ideologues graphically address the visceral reality of terrorist violence in their texts. Al Qaeda, however, expends more effort on the discursive aspects of the crises as well as on ethical arguments, making its texts appear relatively less violent than Heinzen's.

This difference in proportion of textuality addressing violence and addressing discursive aspects may explain why Al Qaeda has attracted relatively little criticism for the violent content of its statements. Both Heinzen and Conrad offended many with their violent texts. Individuals and newspapers in Europe and the USA condemned Heinzen with some of the strongest criticism caming from former friends.[424] Conrad too was severely

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[423] Kolani, R. (2004). Terrorism and Modern Literature, From Joseph Conrad to Ciaran Carson (review). *Partial Answers: Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas , 2* (2), 213-218 .
[424] Op. Cit., Bessner, D., & Stauch, M. (2010). p. 151.

criticised for the "*sordid surroundings and the moral squalor*" in the *Secret Agent* and had to explain that in telling the story he had "*not intended to commit a gratuitous outrage on the feelings of mankind.*"[425] In both cases their textuality reflected the repugnance that terrorism intended to create. Al Qaeda on the other hand has received more criticism for its actions than for its textuality. What criticism it receives comes from Muslims offended by its exploitation and misrepresentation of their holy texts for mass murder of innocents.

Conclusions

Courtly characteristics of hierarchy, rank and proximity to power are only marginally evident in Al Qaeda's political style, in the creation of sovereign-like personas for bin Laden and its host, Mullah Omar. Al Qaeda publically pays homage to Mullah Omar, as its ultimate commander, without in reality subjecting itself to his authority. All these obvious courtly 'behaviours' are apparent almost exclusively through statements or textuality. Al Qaeda's tight security prevents the emergence of evidence of courtly rivalry amongst its members, but some surely must exist.

Bureaucracy is a major feature of totalitarian movements and Al Qaeda evidently has strict bureaucratic control of security and accounting procedures. Its bureaucracy has been focused on areas crucial to its survival without constraining its ability to rapidly adapt to political and military situations.

Al Qaeda certainly has republican traits. It indulges in a form of public debate, prizes oratory and has adapted well to its primary communication medium, the Internet. The difficulty in ensuring that its statements are heard and taken seriously necessitates that it remains in the public consciousness, requiring it to reinforce statements with rhetorical acts of terrorism. Reputation and credibility are critical to it and because reputation is more at risk from friends than foes, Al Qaeda has been particularly sensitive to criticism from erstwhile friends.

Al Qaeda's political style differs from republicanism on the issue of negotiation. In that respect it has a Hegelian realist approach, regarding violence as the primary basis of

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[425] Conrad. Joseph. The Author's notes in the 1920 edition of the *Secret Agent*. Available at http://www.online-literature.com/conrad/secret_agent/0/.

sovereignty and negotiation as way of mitigating it. Al Qaeda needs to continually communicate with its audience lest it become irrelevant. Much of its political strength is bound up in its discourse but its republican tendencies are limited to a singular and mostly one-sided discourse with its friends and foes.

Al Qaeda is realist to the extent that it views international relations through the prism of power and not negotiation. It differs from realism in its explicit disdain for extant power and the need to justify the acquisition of power.

Although Al Qaeda employs elements of the courtly, bureaucratic, republican and realist political styles, it is not fully encapsulated by all of them. Manifestation of its characteristics as a revolutionary terrorist movement can be distilled through the textuality of fiction and non-fiction literature accompanying the initiation of 19th Century revolutionary terrorism.

Much of Al Qaeda's text lives within modern terrorism's paradigm of scorn and contempt for existing power structures. While realist rhetoric is singular, being expressed through power and communicated primarily to potential adversaries. Revolutionary rhetoric has a duality. It is communicated to both existing power blocks and to futures inheritors of power, the masses. It expresses itself through both a persuasive case for killing and the act of killing itself. The revolutionary political style consequently relies far more on textuality than the realist style. Revolutionaries driven by disdain, have a clearer idea of the faults of the system they wish to overthrow than of the advantages of the one they wish to institute, an imbalance reflected in Al Qaeda's rhetoric.

Explicit discussion of killing in terrorism texts marks a distinctive feature of that political style. These texts confront readers with the brutal reality of killing in order to prepare them to contemplate the act. 'Reality,' is presented as a stark choice: the need to murder to avoid being annihilated. Textual techniques are used to desensitise the readers' normal psychological aversion to the act of killing by repeated use of words such as murder and killing. Graphical descriptions of death are used to incite disdain and inspire retribution. Al Qaeda ideologues, when faced with a degree of war weariness,

have combine textual imagery with mythical narratives to label pacifism a cause of further horror and the act of killing an appealing necessity.

Al Qaeda's revolutionary terrorist style requires that its rhetoric solve a crisis, challenge the ethics of the contemporary order while developing its own and confront the emotions of fear while the inciting hate necessary to motivate action against the status quo. It is ideologically a more complex challenge, necessitating greater reliance on rhetorical devices. The revolutionary terrorist is consequently also a political philosopher.

The revolutionary political style can only sprout in the soil of political and social failure. The terrorists' inability to conduct violence on a mass scale is compensated for by making their violence more horrific and this greater horror is reflected in the violent language of their texts. The horrific reality of violence in text sits alongside the more intellectual political and ethical discourse. In Al Qaeda's case the relatively elaborate nature of this analytical discourse defuses the horror of the violent aspects of its textuality.

Chapter Seven: Oratory, Poetry and Osama bin Laden

Individuals in leadership positions ultimately set political style. Radical or revolutionary political style is particularly dependant upon charismatic personalities. Part of that charisma comes from their rhetoric having an *"authentic passion, which resonates with the times."*[426] This ability to *"seize the mood,"* or what Cicero would have called *'decorum',*[427] is the ability to provide a clear explanation of how to interpret and respond to the confusion arising out of a crisis. As Toynbee puts it, *"Great events need great interpreters. People want someone to explain what's going on and point the way ahead."*[428] It is this feature more than any other that makes rhetoric inseparable from leadership.

Often more than one individual acts as an ideologue or visionary leader in developing and articulating ideology. But at any moment, there is usually an individual who stands out as the leader and ideologue *par excellence*. Osama bin Laden was the undisputed founder and life-long leader of Al Qaeda. As discussed in the chapter on Ideology, ideologies are shaped by and shape the character of individuals. Bin laden's oratory was determined by both his personal qualities and by external influences on him and so these deserve exploration. As ideology uses both rational argument and symbolism, it is worth exploring bin Laden's use of rational argument.

Poetry is a highly effective vehicle for symbolic language and for communicating myths. It has a particular intellectual tradition in the Muslim world and there are also a few cases of poetry used to incite violence by Western orators. Bin Laden's poetry ought therefore be examined to discover what it can reveal about him and about Al Qaeda's ideology. Parts of this Chapter and others deal with Al Qaeda's creation and exploitation of myth but it will be useful to make a comparison of bin Laden's deployment of myths with a religiously inspired leader from another tradition who also indulged in terrorism in similar conditions. The final section therefore compares the rhetoric and myth of Menachem Begin and Osama bin Laden.

Bin Laden the Orator

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[426] Toynbee, P. (2007). Introduction to Great Speeches of the 20th Century . *The Guardian*.
[427] By decorum, Cicero meant the appropriateness of speech, narrative and tone to the occasion.
[428] Polly Toynbee *Op Cit*.

Credibility

In classical theory the development of the orator's art through education was considered important, primarily through the company of wise and educated men. In today's age of self-made men, this is no longer a prerequisite. Nevertheless, Osama bin Laden has wished to associate himself with wisdom and education by ensuring that many of his original fatwas were co-signed by a number of scholars (ullama). His speeches often addressed the plight of religious scholars and teachers in Muslim countries. His desire to link himself with what he considers to be 'righteous and religiously learned men' is also driven by the high status allocated to knowledge and education in Muslim society where clergy is replaced by 'scholars.'

Bin Laden's closeness to Abdullah Azzam in the 1980s during the Afghan campaign against the Soviet army cemented his credentials as a follower of 'correct' extremist doctrine. Later he befriended and co-authored his anti-US fatwa with Ayman al Zawahiri, a prominent Egyptian Islamist and a follower of Sayyid Qutb's anti-Western rhetoric. These associations and connections served to place bin Laden in a credible light amongst Islamist extremists. His desire to co-author statements with well known figures in the extremist community, may partly have been motivated by his shyness and his initial reluctance to speak as an individual rather than the representative of a 'vanguard of believers' but was probably also driven by his desire to achieve credibility through association.

Bin Laden's mythical image as a pious warrior and religious leader was cemented by his acts of charity in Sudan, including the building of local infrastructure with his own money and effort won him acclaim within the Islamist community, as did his work in funding and fighting in Afghanistan. His standing within the extremist community was such that, by the time of his initial public statements, many on camera in the 1990s, he already had high credibility amongst his audience.

Rhetorical Influences

Osama bin Laden seems to have been influenced by radical Islamist ideology during his college days – well before he came to prominence on the world stage in the 1990s. Abdullah Azzam and Mohammad Qutb (brother of Sayyid Qutb), both members of the Muslim Brotherhood, were reportedly his teachers at the King Abd al-Aziz University in

Jeddah. Azzam continued to be an influence on bin Laden during the 1980s Afghan campaign. Bin Laden claims a political awakening following the 1973 Yom Kippur War[429] and it was around that time that he was at University. The foundation for this political awakening is very likely to have been influenced by strong anti-Western and religiously intolerant concepts he would have absorbed through the Salafi controlled Saudi education system.

A panel of Saudi professionals studied the Saudi public school religious curriculum in 2003 and observed that it:

> *"legitimiz[es] the violent repression of the 'other' and even his physical elimination because of his views on disputed issues…. These things may create a misapprehension that violent treatment of the 'other' is a task in which the pupil is obliged to take an interest."[430]*

For example, even in 2009 a twelfth-grade textbook states that *"[m]ajor polytheism makes blood and wealth permissible."* In Islamic legal terms this means that a Muslim can take the life and property of someone believed to be a polytheist with impunity. According to Saudi Salafi Islam, "major polytheists" include Shi'a and Sufi Muslims, who pray at the shrines of saints for blessings, as well as all non-Muslims. Other statements condemn Ahmadi Muslims and the Baha'i faith.[431]

In 2010, the US Commission for International Religious Freedoms (USCIRF) found that Saudi School textbooks continue to teach hatred toward other religions and, in some cases, promote violence. This was despite the Saudi government's undertaking, in July 2006, to the State Department that it would revise textbooks within one to two years to remove intolerant references that disparage Muslims or non-Muslims or promote hatred.[432] A 2009 State Department report confirmed that inflammatory content remained in the textbooks, although there was evidence of substantial revisions since the US first raised the matter.

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[429] Op. Cit., Lawrence, B. (2005). p.xii.

[430] Center for Religious Freedom of Hudson Institute With the Institute for Gulf Affairs. (2008). *2008 Update: Saudi Arabia's Curriculum of Intolerance.* Washington DC: Center for Religious Freedom. p.33.

[431] Ibid p.53.

[432] Leo, L. (2010, June 22). *USCIRF Urges President Obama to Raise Religious Freedom Concerns During Saudi King's Visit .* Retrieved August 2, 2010 from http://www.uscirf.gov: http://www.uscirf.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=3128&Itemid=1

Ideological rather than theological motives appeared to shape the Saudi education syllabus, which contains a high proportion of religious education at the expense of conventional subjects. That theological material is employed in a highly selective manner to promote particular myths and ideas. A US Analysis of Saudi education textbooks indicated that the government "*ignores passages supporting tolerance in the Qur'an and in the stories of the life of the Muslim Prophet Muhammad.*" However, when addressing Western audiences it "*invokes just such passages*" to make the *"argument that there can be found support within Islamic tradition for "inalienable human rights," and the peaceful coexistence of Muslims with other religious believers.*"[433] There is consequently a dual and contradictory exploitation of Islamic theology by the Saudi regime. On the one hand, its educational "*texts teach students that there exist two incompatible realms – one consisting of true believers in Islam, the monotheists, and the other of infidels or unbelievers – and that these realms never coexist in peace.*"[434] On the other hand, the Saudi regime depicts itself as a moderate and peaceful Islamic state whose values are fully compatible with the international community.

The Saudi Salafi educational curriculum would have been even more anti-western, intolerant of other Muslims and militant in its interpretation of jihad during the late 1960s and early 1970s when bin Laden was at school.[435] His and subsequent generations of Saudi students will have absorbed these ideas and associated myths as 'commonplaces'. They would have seen world events through the lens of these myths and would be responsive to rhetoric that reinvigorates and reinforces them.

The idea of a Jewish-led conspiracy against Islam, which become a dominant theme in Al Qaeda's narrative has its roots in the Saudi Salafi education syllabus. A lesson on the *"Zionist Movement"* is provided in a tenth-grade book. The lesson blends *"conspiracy theories about Masonic Lodges, Rotary Clubs, and Lions Clubs with anti-Semitic invective."* It recognizes the Protocols of the Elders of Zion as an authentic document and it *"blames many of the world's wars and discord [fitna, in Arabic] on the Jews."*[436] These ideas

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[433] Op. Cit., Center for Religious Freedom of Hudson Institute With the Institute for Gulf Affairs. (2008). p.17-18.
[434] Op. Cit., Center for Religious Freedom of Hudson Institute With the Institute for Gulf Affairs. (2008). p.14.
[435] Bergen, P. L. (2006). *The Osama bin Laden I Know*. New York: Free Press. Bergen, P. L. (2006).
[436] Ibid. p.46

probably enhanced the feeling of dishonour and frustration felt by bin Laden at the defeat by Israel in 1973 and which led to his 'political awakening'. They will have also shaped his reaction to Egypt's peace accord with Israel in 1979, which he, like many Arabs, saw as a shameful and cowardly betrayal. These and subsequent world events validated in bin Laden's mind the myth of a Jewish and Western conspiracy to control world affairs and to destroy Islam.

The Saudi declaration of jihad in Afghanistan and the mobilization of individual volunteers and financial support exploited a number of myths created within its education system. The most significant was jihad, which was narrowly defined as "*wrestling with the infidels by calling them to the faith and battling against them*"[437] and by claiming that "*the spread of Islam through jihad is a religious obligation.*" The impact of the myth was strengthened by the fact that Saudi school texts contain only passing reference to jihad as an inner spiritual struggle, emphasizing instead the martial context. The ethical justification of killing was further supported by teaching schoolchildren that, "*polytheism makes blood and wealth permissible.*"[438] The following statement in a textbook encapsulates the myth of Divine guarantee of success in Jihad, "*Muslims will triumph because they are right. He who is right is always victorious, even if most people are against him.*"[439] All these myths, but especially the myth of divinely ordained success, were apparently confirmed by the withdrawal and eventual collapse of the Soviet Union. The Afghan conflict confirmed to Salafists and others the supremacy of jihad as a religious practice and the subordinate myth of martyrdom. Both ideas are repeatedly emphasized in Saudi education:

> "*a call for jihad, which is the pinnacle of Islam. In (jihad) is life for the body; thus it is one of the most important causes of outward life. Only through force and victory over the enemies is there security and repose. Within martyrdom in the path of God (exalted and glorified is He) is a type of noble life-force that is not diminished by fear or poverty.*" [440]

It was inevitable that bin Laden would view Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait as a legitimate conflict between 'true Muslims' and a 'polytheist regime' resolvable, like Afghanistan, through a jihad. The Saudi King's decisions to reject bin Laden's solution

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[437] Ibid p.13. Note: The word "battle" is translated from the Arabic *qital* and is derived from the verb *qatala*, "to kill." It is virtually never used in a metaphoricall sence.
[438] Ibid. p.53.
[439] Ibid p.45.
[440] Saudi School Textbook, Tafsir, Arabic/Sharia, p.68. Quoted in Ibid p.54.

and rely on the support of the West – the very powers he was taught were un-Godly and evil – confirmed to him the idea of the two 'incompatible realms' and the subordinate myths "*that the Crusades never ended*" and that the "*clash*" between the two realms "*continues until the Day of Resurrection.*"[441] The Saudi regime was guilty, amongst other things, of rejecting the myth it had itself created and spread.

However, bin Laden did not take on an overtly anti-Western or anti-Saudi stance during his education or engage in any recorded political activity until he volunteered for the jihad in Afghanistan during the 1980s. There, the Islamist indoctrination of an ideological conflict between the Muslim world and its enemies (both the West and the Communists) gained a realisable form. It was then that the Salafi myths learned by bin Laden at school and the militant Islamist worldview he absorbed from his lecturers at University blended with his hardy activist personality, in the environment of a major internal conflict, became a reality.

Personal Qualities

Little is known about the influence of parents on Osama bin Laden. He appears to have been an admirer of his father although they didn't spend much time together; Mohammad bin Laden died when Osama was less than eleven years old. Osama was critical of only one thing: his father's habit of frequently divorcing and marrying to keep his more than twenty wives down to the legal limit of four allowed under Islamic law. Osama's Syrian mother was one of the many who was divorced to make way for a newer bride. Osama was loving and respectful towards his mother but her influence on him is unclear. The one thing that Osama shared with his father was the symbolic significance of Palestine to his Muslim identity. Osama was aware that his father would on occasion fly his aircraft between Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem on the same day so that he could spread his daily prayers between the two grand mosques in Saudi Arabia and the Al Aqsa mosque in Palestine. This stopped after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war much to Mohammed bin Laden's chagrin. He was so incensed that he asked his employees if they could convert his construction plant into tanks to regain Palestinian territory. This vision of religion primarily through the prism of geography, politics and war appears to have been the strongest and most sustaining influence on Osama from his father.

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[441] Ibid. p.25.

Bin Laden is a hero to many, even to some that are strongly opposed to his vision and style. He is admired in militant non-Muslim communities in places as far afield as South America where his anti-US stance equates him to the Che Guevara legend. His charismatic reputation was forged in the mountains of Afghanistan where he was recognised for his probity, austerity, dignity and courage.[442] These qualities, especially those of austerity and courage were reinforced after the 1990s when he took on the world's only remaining superpower and dealt it a blow that some recognise as a just punishment for its numerous military and political excesses in Muslim countries. His continued defiance of world power and his apparently rational, principled and consistent arguments added to his aura of greatness. Bin Laden made the choice to forego the riches available to him in favour of championing the cause of his people and religion. CIA's Michael Scheuer says of him,

> "*there is no reason, based on the information at hand, to believe bin Laden is anything other than what he appears: a pious, charismatic, gentle, generous, talented and personally courageous Muslim. And as a historic figure, viewed from any angle, Osama bin Laden is a great man, one who smashed the expected unfolding of universal post-Cold War peace*".[443]

His qualities are not unique for a revolutionary leader, but what sets him apart is that in recent Islamic history there is no equal. Unsurprisingly, he has been likened to Saladin, a title many Muslim leaders such as Saddam Hussein have unsuccessfully tried to expropriate. His high-principled and modest existence starkly contrasts with the decadent and self-interested lifestyle of the typically rich and powerful Muslim leader.

For those who share his religious vision, these qualities echo those of the Prophet of Islam and his closest followers. Even his teenage friends identified bin Laden as a charismatic leader with an unusually devout outlook.[444] Analysis of first hand accounts of those who knew him in his youth indicate an individual who was punctilious in the observance of his obligatory prayers, scrupulous about social codes and regular in additional voluntary worship such as prayers in the middle of the night and observing the fast twice a week outside the month of Ramadan,[445] altogether very unusual for a young man, in Saudi Arabia. However, these are all ritualistic aspects of religion.

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[442] Op. Cit., Lawrence, B. (2005). p.xvii.
[443] Scheuer, M. (2004). *Imperial Hubris*. New York: Brassey's. p. 104.
[444] Bergen, P. L. (2006). *The Osama bin Laden I Know*. New York: Free Press. P.14.
[445] Ibid

Significantly, there is no record of him making a statement that showed an appreciation of spirituality; a love of the Creator or His creation. The only reported statement of his motive for people to be 'good Muslims' was so that they could become strong and regain the lost land of Palestine.[446]   It appears therefore that his religiosity was mostly ritualistic driven by contemporary political and social concerns rather than asceticism inspired by transcendental desires.

Charisma in its purest form has a religious aura; "*Max Weber regarded the prophet as the prototype of charismatic leader.*"[447]   Many Muslims know that the Prophet of Islam lived a heroic but frugal existence. He had less than a handful of possessions when he died, all of insignificant value, even though he was effectively Head of State at the time. For the masses, bin Laden is a heroic warrior leader. Consequently he is the embodiment of Islamic virtue for his followers. They forget that to the qualities of probity, austerity, dignity and courage, the Prophet also added ready compassion and a consistent desire to resolve disputes through negotiation and treaties rather than war. During war he scrupulously avoided even inconvenience to civilians let alone targeting them. It was these qualities that led to the rapid spread of Islam.[448]   Bin Laden, on the other hand, has so far been singular in his pursuit of unrestrained violence. Bin Laden's immense appeal therefore relies on a selective reflection of historical and theological narrative within his own life. He has successfully styled himself as a righteous Muslim, resigned to hardship and conflict for the sake of his brethren and one who accepts his lot with courage and steadfastness.

Rational Argument

Both Michael Mann[449] and Scheuer vouch for bin Laden's extensive deployment of rationality in argumentation. Although he occasionally cuts corners with logic or evidence, he avoids doing so to the extent that would lead an obvious loss of credibility. Scheuer goes on to describe him as having demonstrated, "*patience, brilliant planning, managerial expertise, sound strategic and tactical sense, admirable character traits,*

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[446] Ibid
[447] Op. Cit., Wilkinson, P. (1971). p.60.
[448] For a full account see: Khan, M. Z. (1980). *Muhammad Seal of the Prophets.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
[449] Mann, M. (2003). *Incoherent Empire* . London: Verso. p.169.

eloquence, and focused, limited war aims."[450]   This rationality, recognised by Western minds, registers more powerfully with bin Laden's Muslim target audience.   Mixing apparently rational argument with a polemic style is the distinctive signature of bin Laden's rhetoric.   Bin Laden is not considered to be an original thinker.   Nor did he possess outstanding scholarship but he was sufficiently familiar with scripture to exploit it for his message.   His rhetorical style was primarily one of a polemicist, putting forward his case to "*real or imagined opponents.*"[451]   These arguments have been described as 'tactical', "*talking for victory*" by some including Lawrence but that is an oversimplification.   The strength of bin Laden's rhetoric, indeed of Al Qaeda's ideology in general, is the ability to seamlessly link theological, political and military doctrines.   These include discussion of philosophical, grand strategic, strategic, operational and tactical issues, sometimes within one statement or document.

Polemic, more than any other style, encapsulates indignation and is best suited to appeal for justice in an adversarial context.   As such it is the optimal style to register bin Laden's role as a champion advocate in defence of Islam and the *ummah*. He repeatedly refers to symbols of suffering – examples of situations where Muslims have been humiliated or oppressed by non-Muslims, such as in Palestine, Chechnya, Kashmir and, above all, his homeland, Saudi Arabia, where the US military "occupies" the holy places of Islam. The only way to defend against this suffering, he argues, is to confront America militarily. The use of polemics is so extensive in bin Laden's discourse that Lawrence considers:

> *"One label, and only one label, seems to take the measure of the man, to offer some insight into his public persona as well as his enduring appeal. He is a polemicist; indeed, OBL is a dogged, razor-edged polemicist advocating an anti-imperial ideology."[452]*

Polemics need to be understood in terms of five types of Muslim public discourse: declaration, judicial decree, lecture, written reminder and epistle.   According to Flag Miller, bin Laden is able to fluently manoeuvre between these rhetorical genres and it is this ability that enables him to legitimise his religious authority over a range of different traditions.   His statements are composed with literary skill.   It is possible that they were not all composed by him but they were certainly all written in his style.   Bernard Lewis describes this style as "*a magnificent piece of eloquent, at times even poetic Arabic*

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[450] Anonymous (Michael Scheuer), *Imperial Hubris* (Potomac, 2004), page 104.
[451] Op. Cit., Lawrence, B. (2005). p.xvi.
[452] Op. Cit., Lawrence, B. (2007).

prose.[453] Bin Laden's rhetorical skills were directly linked to his credibility and hence his motivational influence within the Muslim world. They appealed across the spectrum from illiterate masses to the lettered classes. Bin Laden's appeal relied on avoiding academic complexity in his speech, as Hegghammer describes:

> "*There are no complex theological arguments, for the simple reason that Bin Laden's intended audience, the Muslim masses, are not versed in the technicalities of Islamic jurisprudence. Bin Laden's discourse is profoundly political and elegant in its simplicity. It is populism at its most effective and most frightening.*"[454]

Poetry, Rhetoric and Intellectual Culture

Since poetry is regarded as the "*field in which words are handled with their maximum force and expressiveness, we find that the links between rhetoric and poetry have been numerous and firm,*"[455] to the extent that rhetoric and poetry have in the past been treated as one art. That link has largely been broken in contemporary Western society where poetry has become unfashionable as a vehicle for philosophical and historical discourse and has been relegated to a minor branch of the cultural arts.

In Arabic and most Eastern cultures, however, poetry still enjoys the status of an intellectual pursuit. As such, it frequently appears in Muslim political and theological discourse and often features in Al Qaeda's rhetoric. Indeed, poetry and rhetoric (*kalam*)[456] remain interchangeable terms in Arabic, Persian and Urdu. It is common for philosophical poetry to be referred to as rhetoric (*kalam*). This philosophical poetry is not just available to be read in textual form but is also recorded as songs, with or without musical accompaniment, by popular classical singers in Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and India amongst other countries.[457] Also, it is worth noting that for Sufi and most other movements in Islam, the conceptions of philosophical discourse do not differ

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[453] Lewis, B. (1998, November/December). License to Kill: Usama bin Ladin's Declaration of Jihad. *Foreign Affaira* .

[454] Op. Cit., Hegghammer, T. (2008, April 4). p. 15-17.

[455] Op. Cit., Dixon, P. (1971). p.3.

[456] *Kalam* is literally translated as writing or words. Its dual meaning of writing and reasoning is similar to Aristotle's' use of the Greek Logos to denote both the human power of speech and reason. Indeed, the first revelation of Islam refers to this metaphoric link between communication and reason and places it the centre of the creation of human nature: "Read, in the name of the Lord who created, created man from a clot of blood. Recite, for thy Lord is most beneficent; who taught by the pen, taught man what he knew not." Qur'an (96:2-6). The word pen is *Kalm* in Arabic with obvious links to language and, through the Qur'anic verse, to knowledge.

[457] There are many other examples of poetical and philosophical works being referred to as rhetoric such as *kalam-e-Mahmood.*

greatly from those of the West and they have, if anything, a less negative view of rhetoric. After all, it was the Muslims of North Africa and Spain that translated and critiqued the philosophy of Socrates, Aristotle and Plato and preserved it for Western consumption following the Enlightenment.

Another factor that accentuates the impact of poetry in some Muslim cultures is that it is usually the only acceptable form of social entertainment in fundamentalist communities. Music, dance and acting are considered taboo and so a tradition of poetry renditions has evolved. This is particularly the case at weddings where Islamist extremists often regale each other with religious or jihadi poetry. Through the medium of poetry, social culture, political outlook and spiritual enrichment are seamlessly combined in these communities.   Miller offers the following observation on bin Laden's lyrical performances at weddings where he tends to recite religious poetry, "*the marriage ceremony normally the one that confirms the strongest of social bonds now being used to talk about the strongest of spiritual bonds.*"[458]

The main difference between poetry and other types of discourse is that it more powerfully connects with human emotions.   It persuades by what Aristotle called pathos rather than by rational argument (logos). Exploitation of existing cultural myths and creation of new ones are central to poetical discourse. As Miller says, "*Poetry allows the performer to kind of live the myth.*" Ideologue poets aim to become "*myth makers*" rather than mere "*myth narrators.*"[459]   According to Miller, poetry intoxicates the emotions and binds the group "*with its rhymes and suddenly you feel very close and embodied.*" Although poetry is a creative art, to be most effective in myth making it needs to evoke elements of extant cultural narratives and images.

Radovan Karadzic and his followers grew up with "*old mythic poems about battles*" in the former Yugoslavia, which provided a readily available "*stock of images*" for his poems intended to incite violence. The author's creativity determines how these images and myths are selected and arranged. In so doing a new language is invented to "*mobilise*

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[458] Miller, F. (2008 21-October). Bin Laden, the Poet. *The Current.* (A. M. Tremonti, Interviewer) CBC .
[459] Ibid.

people because the common conventions of warfare and global diplomacy don't favour their radicalism."[460]

Poetry's power to incite violence was the basis of Jay Surdukowski's proposal that the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) uses Karadzic's texts and affectations to warrior poetry as evidence during Karadzic's trial. Evidence of incitement through radio broadcasts, political journals, speeches, interviews, and manifestos has been submitted in cases in both the Yugoslavia and Rwanda Tribunals. He asks "*Why should poetry, perhaps the most powerful maker of myth and in the Yugoslavia context, a great mover of dangerous men and women, be any different in the eyes of international law?*"[461] Karadzic has certainly used poetry to justify, glorify and incite violence in a manner that has striking parallels with other ideologues. He refers to the Serbs as "*a warrior race*" and says they have "*been betrayed for centuries. Today they can't live with other nations. They must have their own separate existence. They're a warrior race and they can trust only themselves to take by force what is their due.*" [462] By doing so, he not only articulated their grievance narrative but also provides an identity. Both echo Al Qaeda's worldview of a conflict between the 'pure' nation and the other in which violence by warriors is both obligatory and glorious.

Poetry is a way for political ideologues to say "*things that they wouldn't normally be able to say in other contexts.*"[463] Poetry allows the Islamist extremists to camouflage political ideas within an apparently theological message. Because the Qur'an extensively uses poetic devices and language, political ideas expressed in poetry can be passed off as religious interpretations. Sayyid Qutb, one of the most influential ideologues for Al Qaeda, was a renowned Egyptian poet well before he became famous for his Islamist writings. His writings, both on political topics and theological interpretations, extensively used poetic devices and Qutb's style continues to influence Islamist extremist language. Both Osama bin Laden and Ayman Zawahiri occasionally craft couplets or full poems to both underscore their literary credentials and to emotionally engage their followers. They make use of poetry as a rhetorical device and poetry is

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[460] Ibid.
[461] Surdukowski, J. (2005). Is Poetry A War Crime? Reckoning For Radovan Karadzic The Poet-Warrior. *Michigan Journal of International Law , 26* (673), 677.
[462] Zimmerman, W. (1996). *Origins of a Catastrophe.* New York: Times Books. Quoted by Jay Surdukowski, Op Cit.
[463] Ibid.

often a backdrop to their communications in the form of religious songs (*nasheeds*). For example, to inspire his followers to fight, bin Laden says: "*the high blow may be many times the high blows are many, but the short and swift blow which cause the enemy to bleed are the best of blows.*"[464] Speaking to the potential Iraqi insurgency before the US led invasion in 2003, he says to them:

> *"Your wish to the crusaders should be as came[sic] in this verse of poetry: 'The only language between you and us is the sword that will strike your necks.'"[465]*

Bin Laden's Political Poetry

According to respected Western scholars of Arabic literature, bin Laden is "*one of the best prose writers in Arabic*"[466] and he writes in a manner that is "*elegant, at times even poetic.*" The messages communicated through poetry are significant in emotionally captivating and inspiring bin Laden's Arabic audience. Western analysts, who rarely even bother translating the poems, largely ignore these messages.

According to Flagg Miller, bin Laden produces "*good poetry*". He uses poetry in a similar way to many leaders of violent ideologies by evoking metaphors from history and using symbolism to inspire the expected response.[467] Given bin laden's Yemeni roots, Miller unsurprisingly finds elements of the Yemeni genre in his poetry.   The "*symbolic vocabulary*" bin Laden exploits is "*not unique to him.*" At times he cites other poets and at "*times he adopts their verse and makes it his own.*" This in itself is a common technique amongst poets, worldwide. To determine bin Laden's unique style, Miller postulates the application of historical and cultural context to determine how bin Laden departs from the "*established traditions of Muslim poetry.*" He states that bin Laden "*puts a spin on it that's far more militant than I've encountered through my years of doing work amongst people in the region*". Bin Laden's most frequent and powerful sources of historical reference are the companions of the Prophet and their struggle but he is "*often bending the stuff to appeal to support for jihad in Afghanistan and further afield.*"[468] Poetry may change the style of communication and the level at which it is perceived but the

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[464] Osam bin Laden Speech 22 Jun 00.
[465] Osama bin Laden's Message to Iraq, dated 11 Feb 03
[466] Collins, L. (2005, August 22). O.B.L. *The New Yorker* .
[467] Miller, F. (2008, October 21). Bin Laden, the Poet. *The Current*. (A. M. Tremonti, Interviewer) CBC .
[468] Ibid.

substance of the argument remains the same as in normal verbal discourse; history, myth and theology are exploited in the same in both.

In addition to borrowing historical metaphors, bin Laden's other notable avenue for creativity is to find symbology that glorifies and inspires violence. His poems "*consistently emphasize idioms of conventional combat and hand to hand combat.*"[469] Often these ideas are embedded in what Miller calls "*fantastic scenarios*" involving men fighting in the company of supernatural creatures or lions, which are deployed as a "*metaphor for courageous manliness.*" Miller recognizes elements of Lord of the Rings and "*a kind of fantastical supernatural human war going on.*" The purpose of these linguistic devices is to "*teach people about the importance of combat*" and to intellectually prepare them for it.

Miller uses the term 'voice' to explain the particular capacity of poetry to articulate difficult emotional concepts and to provide a response that resonates at both the rational and emotional level. Bin Laden uses poetry to create a voice for his vision of 'world transformation through violence.' This voice also confronts the inevitable ethical compromises that have to be addresses when violence is deployed in the cause of a 'better' world, "*and so they turn to poetry in order to try and explain and defend those in a more personal voice.*"[470]

Grievance Narrative in Poetry

In a co-authored poem, bin Laden encapsulates grievances within the Muslim world by using the device of a conversation between a child and his father. The child represents the innocence and vulnerability of ordinary Muslims and the father represents bin Laden, the personification of a reluctant, compassionate and wise vanguard of Islamist extremists committed to defending against the injustices being meted out to Muslims. The poem is entitled 'The Travail of a Child Who Has Left the Land of the Two Holy Shrines'. A selection of verses is included in Appendix 1.

The poem neatly summarises the Islamists' grievance narrative and, by extension, Al Qaeda's raison d'être. It also eludes to bin Laden's role in international affairs as well as justifying his decision to fight. The poem begins with a description of the plight of a

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[469] Ibid.
[470] Ibid.

child in Saudi Arabia but reflects more generally the condition of Muslims in many other countries especially in Palestine. The absence of security and sanctuary necessitating exile are highlighted in the initial verses. The orphaning of children and the frequent incarceration of males are linked to military occupation and the presence of the USA in Muslim lands and its domination of the media through which it expounds a narrative justifying its actions and stance. In other words, the poem opens with a description of the social and political crises facing Muslims. These are the very situations that George Kennedy describes as leading to the rise of sophistic traditions in China and India, as well as the conditions that Dekmejian sees as leading to the development of extremist theology and politics.[471]

The poem suggests that struggle, hardship and sacrifice are the only options for those who wish to confront the crisis but the innocent Muslim masses are perplexed and need an enlightened explanation. Here, bin Laden wants to be seen as responding to the appeal of the helpless Muslim masses. He does so by first reinforcing their feelings of helplessness, bewilderment and anguish and he admits to being "*powerless and speechless*" and to his eyes being "*flowing springs*". He then embarks on autobiographical verses aimed at placing his own migrations in the context of the grievances and the conflicts facing Muslims. The disappointment at his expulsion from Khartoum is contrasted with the nobility, bravery and hospitality of the people of Kabul, who contain within their ranks the Al Qaeda appointed "*Commander of the faithful*", Mullah Omar.

The killing of innocent civilians by US missile strikes, presumably in Afghanistan and Pakistan, is catalogued. Consequently, the child is made to wonder for what crime the "Wanted Posters" of bin Laden are distributed when all he wanted to do was defend his heritage against a reckless, immoral world in which the great powers trade and play with the sovereignty of weak peoples.

The situation is spelt out as a tragedy in which Muslims in general and bin Laden in particular are indignant victims. Zionists are the major criminals in this world and they are helped by the USA's neutering of Arab regimes whose indifference beyond verbal platitudes is depicted as shameful treachery. The compliant Arab leaders are identified

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[471] Op. Cit., Dekmejian, H. (1995). p.8

as being untruthful, a charge often laid at the door of western rhetoric by Arabs. Unwittingly, this confirms Kennedy's generic assessment that at the roots of western rhetoric, truth was often sacrificed in favour of victory in argument.[472]

All this confirms to the audience the seriousness of the crises, bin Laden's acute awareness of their situation and suffering and his genuine empathy with them. It also confirms his credibility through common suffering and extraordinary sacrifice. When he finally provides his 'son' with the requested "*brief, enlightening explanation*", the audience is ready to accept what to many would be a reasonable, authoritative and accurate assessment and what appears to be the only effective response possible: "*I swear by God the great that I shall fight.*"

To underscore its appeal, bin Laden uses classical Qur'anic Arabic to write this and many other poems. The language used gives the verses religious authority and wider appeal, "*Even those who are not literate people, who cannot read, when this kind of Arabic is read to them they understand it because they recite the Koran every day.*"[473] For example, the use of the word migration (*hijra*) evokes a resonance with the Prophet's migration or exile from Mecca to Medina when persecution of Muslims within Mecca became intolerable. The event was a seminal point in Islamic history when Muslims went from experiencing subjugation to experiencing victory. Its significance is such that it marks the start of the Islamic calendar. The poem exemplifies how bin Laden establishes credibility, selects an appropriate style and establishes pathos. Collectively, these qualities are examples of what Cicero meant by *decorum*.

The poem makes no direct theological reference. Instead, it focuses almost exclusively on cataloguing the injustices and suffering of a people, on capturing their indignation and making the case that fighting is the only answer to the political crises faced by Muslims. It does this by combining a realist message with an emotional appeal to the pride and paternal instincts of Muslim masses.

The poem's emphasis is not so much on making a persuasive argument as it is on making an ethical case. It exposes the ethical flaws in those who are responsible for the suffering of Muslims and makes a prima facie case for the ethics of retaliation. As such,

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[472] Op. Cit., Herrick, J.A. (2005). p 268
[473] Rohde, D. (2002, April 7). Verses From bin Laden's War. *The New York Times*.

the structure of the poem is less in keeping with Aristotelian principles of argument construction and more akin to Fox's hypothesis that Middle Eastern rhetoric does not "*formulate arguments because it is not argument but rather the ethical stance of the speaker*"[474] that achieves its aims. Bin Laden aims to show that he and his followers are ethically superior to a morally bankrupt West and its allies.

At the heart of the ethical case lies the metaphor of the child who suffers destitution, exile and emotional detachment from his mother and siblings. Depiction of that suffering is intended to invite an urgent and active response to alleviate it. Children are mentioned, both in a literal and metaphorical sense, extensively by bin Laden in his many statements. But revealingly, in this poem and in virtually all of his statements, bin Laden makes no attempt to use such a metaphor in any symbiotic fashion. That is to say, he never refers to the children of his enemies as victims of violence. To do so would mean identifying with the suffering of children, Muslim or non-Muslim, who may have been killed or injured by Islamist-inspired violence. That would weaken his ethical stance and would also limit Al Qaeda's use of violence to further its goals.

Myths and Rhetoric – A Comparison with Menachem Begin

By comparing bin Laden's exploitation of myth and rhetoric with another charismatic leader operating in a similar geographic and political environment it should be possible to discriminate between those elements of style and ideas that are common to the political struggles in a Middle Eastern and religious context from those that are particular to the individuals' particular ideological traditions. To do this it is necessary to concentrate on their use of myth in constructing and communicating ideology.

Menachem Begin and Osama bin Laden have many similarities. They both embarked on a revolutionary struggle using violence and rhetoric against Middle Eastern governments as well as the West to establish what they regard as their historic and religious right. They were both accused of being terrorists and both rejected the allegation, claiming their actions as just and necessary (although bin Laden accepted the label on one occasion by reinterpreting it as the actions of an individual fighting oppression of the innocents.) There are of course differences. Unlike bin Laden, Begin succeeded in establishing his goal, the state of Israel, and transformed himself from a

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[474] Op. Cit., Herrick, J.A. (2005), op. cit. p 266

revolutionary terrorist to a statesman accepting peaceful negotiations within the community of nations. Begin's aims were geographically limited, bin Laden's are global.

Begin and bin Laden's early experiences are radically different. The Nazis virtually wiped out Begin's family and he was imprisoned in the Gulag by the Soviets. Bin Laden, in contrast, had a benign upbringing within the bosom of his rich family in Saudi Arabia. This difference in formative experiences of the two men reflects the difference between their communities as well as their choices in the formation and exploitation of myths. The Holocaust was a powerful and sustaining myth that inspired, shaped both Begin's character and his political outlook. Begin and fellow Zionists exploited the cataclysmic events of the Holocaust to unite the diverse Jewish Diaspora. No such single cataclysmic event occurred in postmodern and postcolonial Muslim experience. The task of coalescing the *ummah* is therefore more problematic and so bin Laden and others had to accept a greater degree of disunity as a necessary ideological condition. The concept of the few or the vanguard of 'true believers' has been adapted to discriminate between its followers, the undecided Muslims and the anti- Al Qaeda 'apostates'. Critiquing the clerics who issued anti Al Qaeda fatwas, bin Laden unfavourably compares their conduct with that of the 9/11 'vanguards':

> "*These clerics betrayed their mission of serving the nation and its causes, championed its enemies, and became hostile to its mujahid vanguards that inflicted on the United States the first defeat in its history ....*"[475]

His supporters treated Begin with almost religious fervour. According to Philip Gillion the Likud party was in agreement about only one thing, "*the near divinity of Menachem Begin*". Whilst, neither bin Laden nor his supporters will allow any association of divinity with him (that would be the ultimate sin in Islam), he is most affectionately and devoutly followed by his supporters and has considerable respect and credibility amongst many who do not fully buy into his ideology.

Both bin Laden and Begin understood the power of symbolic rhetoric, particularly of violent action. For them attacking the enemy was not an end in itself; they did not embark on attritional warfare. Begin's Irgun targeted the British with symbolic intent. Rowland describes their strategy as:

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[475] Osama bin Laden, (27 Oct 2002). '*The Will*'. Audio Statement. Released via the Internet.

> *"The operations of the Irgun were not aimed at a military victory, but at rhetorical victory in which the ability of the "terrorists" to strike at will against the British Empire would symbolise the failure of the Empire and force the British to leave Palestine."*[476]

Begin said,

> *"History and our observations persuaded us that if we could succeed in destroying the government's prestige in Eretz Israel (the land of Israel) the removal of its rule would follow automatically. Thenceforward, we gave no peace to this weak spot. Throughout all the years of uprisings, we hit the British government's prestige, deliberately tirelessly, unceasingly."*[477]

This use of verbal and textual rhetoric to reinforce and explain violent symbolic action is paralleled by bin Laden. Two weeks after the start of the US bombing against Afghanistan, bin Laden told an al Jazeera correspondent, "*America's defeat is possible, with God's assistance. It is easier for us than the defeat we inflicted upon the Soviet Union before.*" He also pointed to the abrupt failure of US forces in Somalia in 1993, which he saw as part of global jihadi resistance, as evidence of his confidence.

In terms of styles of speech, there seems to be a difference between the two men. Begin's oratory has been described as powerful and his speeches were "*electrifying*",[478] mainly because his voice echoed the aggressive energy of his message. As such, Begin's oratorical style was typical of revolutionary leaders. Bin Laden, on the other hand has a calmer and apparently rational style which contrast noticeably with the threats (and subsequent action) he made against the West. It also contrasts with the traditional emotional and angry style of the majority of militant Islamist leaders and so it contributes to his distinctive image of a sincere man whose actions are driven by rationality and spirituality rather than a typical Arab preacher or politician, driven by fanaticism or self-interest.

History has greater depth for both Begin and bin Laden than it has for most contemporary leaders. During Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, Begin reacted to Sadat's reference that the current state of Israel was on Arab land in the following manner:

> "*No, sir, we took no foreign land. We returned to our homeland. The bond between our people and this land is eternal. It was created at the dawn of human history. It was never severed. In this land*

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[476] *Op. Cit., Rowland, R. C. (1985).* p. 3.
[477] *Op. Cit., Rowland, R. C. (1985).* p.52.
[478] Haber, E. (1978). *Menachem Begin: The Legend and the Man.* New York: Delacorte.

we established our civilisation; here our prophets spoke these holy words you cited this very day; here kings of Judah and Israel prostrated themselves; here we became a nation; here we established a kingdom and, when we were exiled from our country by the forces that were exercised against us, even when we were far away, we did not forget this land, not even for a single day."[479]

Bin Laden similarly refers to events over a thousand years ago, specifically the Crusades, and the early Muslim caliphate as primary historical references.

This heavy reliance by both men on selective history is linked to another common feature, the desire to be seen as independent of external assistance. Both men seemed incapable of acknowledging assistance given to them by the US and certainly did not want any offers of help. During the 1982 invasion of Lebanon according to Newsweek, "*Begin seemed to resent even the mention of US support for Israel.*" When he visited the US he said, "*I didn't come with my hand outstretched for aid.*" The US Senate could, he said, "*keep its money*". Similarly bin Laden refused to acknowledge any assistance given to him or other mujahedeen during the Afghan war against the Soviets. When asked, "*did not the Americans support the mujahidin's war against the Soviets?*" Bin Laden said:

> "*.... the Americans would be lying if they claim they had supported us. We challenge them to provide evidence supporting such claims. They were a burden on us and on the mujahidin in Afghanistan, for we were performing our obligations in protecting Islam in Afghanistan even though this obligation of ours was at times serving, though without our consent, the interests of America.*"[480]

This apparent inability to acknowledge a factual reality of external support even when, in the case of Begin, it would be politically and economically advantageous to do so is a clue to a distinctive feature of the two men's rhetoric. They are driven more by myth than by rationality. Such mythical worldviews are considered by Rowland to be the reason why Begin was unable to adapt his rhetoric to a variety of audiences and why he refused to compromise even with Israel's most important ally, the US. Bin Laden also harbours no love for the US and has little aspiration for negotiation or compromise. In April 2009 he issued a decree declaring Bashir, the President of Sudan an apostate because he had negotiated with the West, even though Bashir's regime was probably ideologically the closest nation state in existence at the time to Al Qaeda's model government.

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[479] Begin, M. (1977). Address . *Visit of Egyption President Anwar Sadat.* Israel information Centre. p 5.
[480] Osama bin Laden, (1999). Interview with al-Jazeera.

The impact of this uncompromising attitude has been to perpetuate the myth in both the Irgun and Al Qaeda of success through terrorism that was helped only by God because of its sacred nature. In reality, Irgun's violence was just a contributory factor in the success of its aim. The establishment of Israel resulted from a number of political pressures including the considerable influence and help of Jews sympathetic to the creation of the State in both the UK and the USA.[481] Begin's rhetoric ignored this reality, especially after Israel had been established because the myth of independent violence needed to be perpetuated to safeguard the future of the new country.

Bin Laden's Al Qaeda does not enjoy a similar level of support amongst the Muslim Diaspora. It desperately needs to mobilise as much of the Muslim world behind it as possible. Sudan under Bashir and Somalia under Sharif were ideologically the closest potential allies of Al Qaeda but the engagement of both presidents in negotiations with the West precluded them because their actions had threatened the myth of independent holy violence. Bin Laden's rhetoric matches his ideological reliance on violence to achieve his goals. The near impossibility of the asymmetric power imbalance he faces is set against the ideological myth of Divine assistance in his political struggle.

Comparison of Myths and Rhetoric

Rowland identifies the Holocaust and the concept of 'redemption through return' as the drivers for Begin's mythical views. He assesses that, "*Begin's rhetoric could not be understood outside of the context of Zionism and the history of the state of Israel.*" In a similar way, Osama bin Laden is a product of his ideological inheritance, that of the postmodern Islamist jihadist movement and of the development of postcolonial Muslim states, elements that are discussed in previous chapters.

Both leaders rely on myths that were created many years before them, in response to social and political crises. "*Begin's revisionist myth grew out of a more general Zionist myth, itself created in the 19th century in answer to continuing anti-Semitism in even the*

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[481] Ovendale, R. (1992). *The Arab-Israeli Wars* (Second ed.). London: Longman. p.196-197.

most enlightened areas of Europe."[482] Bin Laden also revised and adapted myths that were mostly created in the 19th and early 20th centuries. These myths form the core of his inherited militant Islamist ideology, which began as a reaction to the social and political crises facing Muslims in India and the Middle Eastern during the colonial era. It is this ideological inheritance with its selective use of history and its desire to return Islam to an imagined past that bin Laden's rhetoric exploits.

Begin's mythical rhetoric responds to two inherited Jewish myths. Firstly, the *"traditional Jewish myth of exile and return created both by traditional religious Jews and by Zionist leaders who interpreted all Jewish history in Israel centred terms,"* and secondly a *"modern Zionist myth which called for the redemption of the Jewish people through return to Zion".*[483] According to this myth, the Jews were exiled from Israel because they had sinned. Similarly, the Islamist interpretation of the political and social crisis facing Muslims during and since colonial times is based on the traditional belief that success and failure are related to Devine favour. In that view contemporary Muslims are being punished for having strayed from the true Islam. The Islamist response was the creation of the myth of redemption through the Islamisation of politics, implicit in which is the notion of returning to the Golden Age of Islam.

Throughout the last eighteen hundred years the traditional Jewish myth of exile and return had necessitated a passive response to events until the advent of the Messiah who would herald the return of the Jews to Israel and create a model society that would become a 'light unto the nations'. The threats of assimilation and anti-Semitism in Nineteen Century Europe, however, allowed the Zionists to express return in political terms and make it the "*total vision of Jewish life.*"[484] A similar Messianic myth pacified Muslims' response to their decline and fall. This involved awaiting the advent of a reformer variously referred to as the *Mahdhi*, Messiah or the Hidden Imam to fight the forces of evil and return Islam to its true glory. It was the emergence of an Islamist movement in response to political domination and aggressive Christian conversion campaigns in the early 20th Century that introduced the alternative idea of revival and salvation through political Islam. Khomeini's success in the Iranian Islamist revolution

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[482] Op. Cit., Rowland, R. C. (1985). p.31.
[483] Ibid
[484] Ibid p.38.

gave the idea its first realisable form.

In order to successfully change the majority Jewish worldview without challenging its entire mythical heritage, the Zionists explained that return to the land of Israel was "*literal, while the Messianic age, which follows that return, is symbolic*".[485] As Hertzberg puts it:

> "*What marks modern Zionism as a fresh beginning in Jewish history is that its ultimate values derives from the general milieu. The Messiah is now identified with the dream of an age of individual liberty, national freedom, and economic and social justice.*"[486]

Begin clearly and self-consciously articulated the link between history, geography and the revised myth of redemption through a 'literal' return, in 1948 at the time of the creation of Israel. He also hinted that redemption required expansion of the Sates' existing boundaries:

> "*The homeland is historically and geographically an entity… we shall bear the vision of a full liberation. We shall bear the vision of a full redemption, and we shall bring it into realization.*"[487]

The Islamist parallel is the creation of a vanguard whose task it is to carry out a 'literal' jihad the success of which will create the conditions for Islam's political superiority in the world. For those jihadis and supporters who have messianic beliefs, that is the point at which the Messiah would arrive. For those who have no such belief, the messianic concept is also symbolic. Bin Laden emphasises personal and collective redemption through the 'literal' action of jihad but avoids discussion of Messianic issues so as not to restrict his message to any particular interpretation of the Messiah or *Mahdhi* in Islam.

The Most significant difference in the rhetoric and actions of the two leaders results from the differences in universality of their versions of the myth of return. Despite the differences in the Jewish population: Zionists and non-Zionists, militant Zionists and pacifists, and the visceral hatred between the Irgun and the Haganah, the Jewish myth of redemption through return applied equally to all Jews. Even after the Haganah had

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[485] Ibid p.40
[486] Hertzberg, A. (1959). *The Zionist Idea.* New York: Antheneum. p.18.
[487] Begin, M. (1983). *The Revolt.* (S. Katz, Trans.) London: W H Allen. P. xxii-xxiii.

members of the Irgun kidnapped and tortured, Begin forbid them from retaliating in order to avoid a civil war amongst the Jews. His admiration of their obedience also confirms that his followers were inspired more by their shared myth than by Begin's leadership alone:

> *"They went to concentration camps, were thrown into dark cellars, starved, beaten, and maligned yet no one ever broke his solemn undertaking not to retaliate on his tormentors…. A human "order" [not to retaliate] would have been of no avail here. The order came from "somewhere," from the depth of Jewish history; and it was obeyed."*[488]

Al Qaeda has not been able to develop a myth that has universal appeal across the Muslim population. Despite making an effort in the 1990s to present itself as the champion of the Muslim common man (*ummah*) it has instead become progressively more exclusive in its definition of what constitutes a Muslim. It is now in direct conflict with all Muslim regimes, which it describes as apostates. What constitutes these regimes for Al Qaeda has been deliberately left obscure to take in security services, government bureaucracy and indeed elements of the economic system, most of which are civilian. This is largely a consequence of its primary tactic of bombing soft targets. The lack of precision and the inability to easily attack political and military targets has forced it to kill mostly civilians. During the Iraq conflict it made a strategic decision to fight against the Shia. Al Qaeda, has therefore, been in violent conflict with Muslims and is likely to continue unless it makes a radical change to its ideology. This represents a significant weakness in its ability to realise its mythical ambitions.

Another weakness is Al Qaeda's more ambitious and poorly defined end state. For the Irgun's and all Zionists, return represented a reasonably small geographical boundary, Israel, albeit some harbour ambitions to extend its current borders. As Zionist ideology was essentially democratic, it encouraged cooperation between all factions, even those that were inimical to each other. Al Qaeda's end state would be a far greater geographical area that has never been fully defined but which would certainly encompass all the contemporary Muslim regimes that which have never united in a single Empire and who probably would never wish to. Its vision of a future political ideology is very singular: one God, one sharia, one law and one leader. Its political

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[488] *Op. Cit., Rowland, R. C. (1985).* p. 96.

ambition works against unity because it challenges existing orders and its ideological vision fails to appeal to most of its potential recruits because it is unwilling to accommodate diversity of worldview.

The relative unity and broad appeal of Zionism arises out of the fact that the Nazi Holocaust did not discriminate amongst the Jews. It created a universal crisis and a binding experience for all of them. The resulting myth had universal appeal across the wide spectrum of political opinion amongst the Jews. On the other hand, colonial rule, independence struggles and superpower politics caused crises at different times and in different forms amongst the various Muslim nations. Palestine after the creation of Israel is the only unifying crises for Muslims but it is a crisis that is external to the vast majority of them and its emotional resonance cannot match the holocaust. Zionism took root in the fertile soil of millennia of crises culminating in the unifying catastrophe of the holocaust. Islamism has not been able exploit a sufficiently emotive and unifying crisis myth to mobilise universal support amongst Muslims.

Although Islamist ideology attempted to articulate a mass mobilisation narrative based on anti-colonial anti-Western grievances, it remained marginal until the 1970s. Subsequently, it has attempted to mobilise support on the basis of local or regional issues and has exploited national identities. Al Qaeda's rhetoric, more than any other Islamist ideology, has attempted to articulate the myth of unified global conflict between Islam and the West. It has so far failed because the reality for most Muslims, except for certain populations in conflict zones such as Iraq and Afghanistan, does not match the rhetoric of Al Qaeda. The result is that Al Qaeda is forced to impose unity amongst Muslims through force, through continued conflict simultaneously with Muslims and the West. This posed a far greater ideological and rhetorical challenge to bin Laden than Begin ever faced.

Conclusions

Osama bin Laden initially attempted to boost his credibility through association with well known extremist figures. His credibility was boosted by his charitable work in the Sudan as well as his funding of the fighting in Afghanistan. Collectively, these won him acclaim within the Islamist community and contributed to his mythical image as a pious

warrior and leader. Bin Laden's sincerity, serious mindedness and apparent piety can be traced to his youth. Through his father's influence he viewed the world through the prism of a seamless link between religion, politics, war and geography. However, his apparent piety is largely based on ritualistic behaviour rather than mystical spirituality. These personality characteristics were probably channelled into a Manichean worldview through the influence of the Saudi education system. Certainly, the direct exposure to primary Qutbian Islamist ideologues contributed to his self-confessed political awakening in response to the political crises in the Middle East. The combination of these remarkable personal qualities, his early commitment to higher ideals and his subsequent selfless devotion to the cause of the underprivileged Muslim world created a heroic and charismatic aura that powerfully underpins his credibility as an orator.

Bin Laden based his arguments on a polemical style mixed with rationality. Although he occasionally cut corners with logic or evidence, he never did so to the extent that would have led to an obvious loss of credibility. A major strength was the ability to seamlessly link theological, political and military doctrines in his rhetoric. By simultaneously discussing philosophical, grand strategic, strategic, operational and tactical issues he achieved a high level of apparent coherency and impact.

Al Qaeda's statements in general and bin Laden's in particular are elegantly written and persuasively presented. Like Karadzic, he used poetry to articulate grievances and to inspire violence. Analysis of a typical poem reveals a construction and style that is prevalent in most Al Qaeda's statements. An urgent and serious crisis is identified comprising a list of explicit and implicit grievances. The causes of the crisis are explained in clear terms, the speaker's credibility or authority is established and his singular solution is presented as the most "rational" way forward. In the discourse with his audience bin Laden assumes the role of the paternalistic vanguard defending the helpless Muslim masses against the influence of a reckless and immoral West.

A comparison between his rhetoric and that of Menachem Begin exposes similarities and differences that reveal a great deal about the use of myths in Al Qaeda's ideology. Both exploit religious myths about crises as punishment for collective sin and revised myths about redemption. In the case of Begin's Zionist inheritance, the myth of redemption

through the Messiah was revised to the idea of redemption through return to the land of Israel. For bin Laden, the Islamists had revised the redemption promised through the advent of the Messiah or *Mahdi* to redemption through the expulsion of foreign influence in Muslim lands. Both revisions converted a spiritual idea into a territorial meaning. In the process the new myths allowed the use of violence to achieve the aim of collective redemption by promising an end to suffering through politically independent territories. Both political traditions are modern but both exploit the ancient history of each with which to sustain their myths and to paint the visions of their respective utopias.

Both men have been regarded as powerful orators although their styles are very different. Begin was a classical revolutionary orator whose voice and diction exuded energy and aggression while bin Laden's style is atypical of revolutionary leader. He adopts a calmer, apparently more reasoned tone. This difference of style may be explained by the difference in the nature of crises that both leaders attempted to address. Begin did not need to explain the singular catastrophe from which the Jews had recently emerged; he merely had to reflect in his speech the bitterness and indignation of the holocaust. Bin Laden has to catalogue a litany of grievances, which only constitute convincing evidence of a 'war on Islam' by the Crusaders and Zionists when presented collectively and rationally.

Both Begin and bin Laden avoid acknowledges assistance from others as that would weaken their claim that success arises out of the rightness of their mission and the virtue of their followers. The scope of this uncompromising rhetoric, however, is not the same for both. Begin, accepted political conciliation and even avoided retaliating against fellow Zionists when attacked in the interest of the wider strategic aim of establishing a united Jewish homeland. Bin Laden resisted any ideological or political compromise. His rhetoric became increasingly uncompromising, deliberately alienating erstwhile sympathisers.

The reasons for the relative success of the Zionist mission compared to the Islamist are related to the differences in how the myths of the two ideologies define their people and how they define their territorial claims. Zionism identifies its followers racially and so is able to accommodate the diversity of Jewish beliefs in existence. Islamism defines its followers by belief and so becomes increasingly definite when challenged by diversity of

interpretation about what constitutes a Muslim and what does not.   This works against the universal mobilisation of a Muslim polity that Al Qaeda seeks to achieve. Zionism's territorial aims are limited to the land of Israel whilst Al Qaeda's ambitions stretch across a vast but poorly defined area, currently or in the past ruled by Muslims. These two mythical features pose a far greater strategic and rhetorical challenge for bin Laden than they did for Begin. The comparison between the two leaders exposes two great mythical problems inherent in Al Qaeda's ideology and which its rhetoric aims to mitigate: its claim that a single externally generated political and social crisis afflicts all Muslims and all Muslim territories, past and present. These myths are resolved, as myths often are, through other myths: the myth that a united body of 'true' Muslims exits and that Al Qaeda somehow has the authority to decide and act on its behalf.

Conclusions

The aim of this research was to develop and apply a theoretical framework to expose Al Qaeda's ideology. The aim arose out of a paradox. On the one hand there is general acceptance that Al Qaeda draws its objectives from "*a radical ideological movement*" and the belief that confronting it would involve a *"war of ideas."* On the other hand, there existed no recognized methodology to analyze the ideology of terrorist movements. The nature of Al Qaeda's ideology could only be addressed once ideology as a concept was understood; specifically, its roles, functions and components as well as how it achieves form through articulation.

The framework developed was necessarily eclectic. It builds on an existing theory of extremism and in the process of addressing the subject the research exposed the utility of a number of other ideas and theories as tools for understanding ideologies in general and for understanding extremism in particular. The resulting framework represents a novel contribution to political analysis in an area where there have been few scholarly contributions. Specifically, the idea that ideology comprises a number of political myths (sometimes referred simplistically as narratives) is critical to the concept of ideology. Ideology is spread, sustained and developed through rhetoric, both linguistic and behavioural. There is therefore an interactive relationship between ideology, myth and rhetoric. The trinity of ideology, political myth and rhetoric has a necessary historical component in which political and social crises play a crucial shaping role.

These conclusions take stock of the theoretical framework and summarise the findings. That summary can only account for some of the main points. The nature of ideology, myth and rhetoric are such that much of their power lies in the subtlety and nuance of detail, which is spread throughout the Thesis. The conclusions also acknowledge potential challenges to the research, identify research gaps for future study and briefly discuss Al Qaeda's evolution in the light of the ideological characteristics identified.

A Theoretical Framework for Understanding Ideology

Ideology and political myth are linked to claims on truth. As these claims are invariably contested, they are expressed as ideas or narratives encapsulated within myths. These partially rationalised myths coexist in ideologies with partly rational beliefs. For this reason argumentation between ideologies is problematic. The challenge is increased by

the complex and sometimes unconscious rules of language. Argumentation theories involving concepts of 'reasonableness', 'intellectual history' and 'social context' are only partially effective in ideological discourse analysis because myth can be an argument in its own right. These complexities make ideological discourse analysis a multifaceted task requiring analysis of myth in the context of associated rhetoric and history.

Work of postmodern theorists suggests that the focus of ideology has shifted from framing the views of the collective to influencing primarily at an individual level. Al Qaeda has failed so far to become a mass movement but it has achieved considerable impact through the activities of a few small groups or individuals indicating that its ideology appeals primarily to the individual. As such, it is very much a modern or postmodern movement.

Ideas about language 'games', threads and sectarianism in ideological formation are useful to a methodological framework. However, the concept of political myth, a contested truth, is the most relevant to understanding the beliefs that constitute an ideology. As these myths are about history or occur in history, conception of history becomes a significant factor. While political myths sometimes exploit theology, they are essentially political and so have to be assessed through political analysis in an appropriate historical context. Myths invariably support arguments and ethical cases making a rational analysis problematic.

Classical concepts of rhetoric remain relevant. Aristotle's categorisation of the study of rhetoric into types, characteristics and features provide a useful framework for analysis, as does an understanding of the relationship between rhetoric, motives, strategy, planning, persuasion and interaction. One aspect of rhetorical studies that deserves greater exploration is cross-cultural rhetoric. The little work done in this field indicates significant differences exist between cultures. These differences are not well understood, possibly accounting for some causes of political misunderstandings and miscalculations between cultures.

Application of a structured approach to argument analysis has little relevance to ideologies that employ mythical arguments. Skinner's concepts of 'speech acts', ideological inheritance and author's intentionality are more productive in those tasks.

The idea of terrorism as a symbolic and rhetorical act is well recognised but importance of a shared language of symbolism is less well known. Symbolic terrorism can only communicate a simple idea and even then only when the symbolic act is understood in the way it was intended. Leeman's idea of reflective rhetoric is relevant here and helps explain the reasons why terror based conflicts can be intractable when one or both sides fail to understand the other's messages.

Hariman's recent and novel contribution in rhetorical studies of linking textuality to political style is a challenging but highly revealing technique for distilling an ideology's political style. Hariman's work does not cover the revolutionary terrorist style and so this research employed Heinzen's '*Murder and Liberty'* as an archetypal text within Hariman's framework.

At the individual level, ideologies are usually the product of intellectuals and are spread by visionary and charismatic leaders. Ideologies are, therefore, influenced by and have influence on the character of individuals significantly involved with them. At the societal level, ideologies can give rise to or arise out of social movements with a shared view of grievances and myths. The role of ideologues in identifying a crisis and charting a way forward is critical to ideological formation and so an analysis of key ideologues is necessary. Their background, formative influences and oratory contribute to their worldview and their social credibility. Poetry is a much-neglected area of rhetorical studies. Analysis of poetry articulating grievances and violence can provide information about the ideology that inspires it. Comparative analysis with ideologues or leaders from a different ideology in a similar environment can reveal a great deal about the ideologies involved.

Summary of Al Qaeda's Ideology

Fundamental Features of Al Qaeda's Ideology

Religion's transcendental nature provides a powerful motivational influence over adherents. Transcendental ideas are almost exclusively contained in mythical form and so religion is often the source of myth in ideology. As Al Qaeda presents itself as a religious movement its ideology is heavily reliant on mythical revisions or re-interpretations of Islam to make sense of contemporary politics, to justify its strategy

and to authenticate its vision of the future. Religious arguments are primarily deployed as ethical justifications for violence.

Ideology functions to integrate and defend by making a moral case based on myth for the beliefs and actions of its members; that case makes contested claims to universal values. Al Qaeda's ideology has been unsuccessful in that function beyond the limited number of its followers. Its ideology operates primarily as propaganda where it selectively employs 'truths' and fiction to construct myth. Its contested propaganda myths depend upon highly selective and polarised rhetoric, accentuating differences that encourage conflict. The increasing conflict between Al Qaeda, the wider Muslim world and the West indicates that mythical elements within its propaganda are most prominent. Some of Al Qaeda's propaganda myths are also used to make an ideological case for its beliefs and actions. Where these have theological roots, they can serve a transcendental function.

Differences arise when ideological ideals confront political and social reality. Success, failure and opportunity afforded by historical reality presents ideologues with choices between maintaining or reviving the ideology's original values and adapting or modernizing it. As political and military strategies stem from ideology they too morph when faced with strategic reality and so can, in turn, modify ideology. These mechanisms are born out by the history of Islamism from which Al Qaeda's ideology evolved. Political exploitation of Islamist movements by secular politicians gave Islamists the opportunity to exert power at a national level but subsequent clampdowns forced them to choose between engaging in non-violent mainstream politics or revolutionary terrorism. Al Qaeda evolved out of Muslim Brotherhood Islamist groups that made the second choice and so its ideology is critical of its erstwhile comrades who, on the basis of pragmatism, adopted the non-violent path. Al Qaeda disparagingly labels them as belonging to "inability" movements.

The realisation that plans for democratic elections in 2004 would deliver a Shia dominated government persuaded Al Qaeda that it had to confront the Shia in order to frustrate the West in Iraq. The resulting animosity is often articulated in theological terms but its origins reveal the cause as political rivalry. Ideological enmity towards the Shia has prevented Al Qaeda championing the Hezbollah led opposition to Israel from

Lebanon and that has been an obstacle to negotiations with Iran over a number of important Al Qaeda members detained in that country.

Much of the perceived threat from the West in the Muslim world emanates from the West's "*offensive display of superiority*" that threatens human dignity. The humiliation resulting from indignity provides the basis for the prominence of Manichaeism in Al Qaeda's ideology. This Manichean feature, supported by the theological myth of *wala al bara*, which limits love and legitimises hate, makes deployment of violence against the 'other' easier. Al Qaeda justifies its violence to the world using the 'defence against aggression' argument articulated as 'just retribution.' However, internally to its followers it justifies it as a 'lifestyle' argument, focusing on the individual in the interest of the collective by deploying a sacred mythical notion of jihad.

Terrorism has been Al Qaeda's primary tactic but revolutionary terrorism has its own ideological framework. Heinzen provided a coherent and prescient ideology of modern terrorism as a transnational progressive means for revolution. The bombing of civilians, the use of science for terrorism and suicide operations were all advocated by him in the 19th Century, as were tactics such as political assassination and the use of improvised explosive devices in insurgency warfare. Although Al Qaeda ideologues have probably never accessed Heinzen's work, their exploitation and justification of terrorism echoes Heinzen's thinking because they share his assumptions about international power politics and reciprocal justification of violence. Like other revolutionary terrorists, Al Qaeda's ideology is clearer about what it stands against than it is about what it stands for. Like Heinzen, Al Qaeda advocates that terrorism, as a political means, also becomes both an objective of personal and political fulfilment.

History, Crises and Myth

Al Qaeda's ideology exploits common theological and historical beliefs within Muslim society. For example, Islamic theology's linking of the rise and fall of temporal power to spiritual purity has allowed Islamists to harness the idea that contemporary Muslim regimes' political weakness, corruption and failures are due to their deviation from the "true Islam." Islamists exploited this idea to advocate a 'return' to a political version of Islam. Al Qaeda developed it to offer salvation through the myth of jihad as an individual and collective redeeming duty.

The 'fixing' of Islamic ethical principles some 1400 years ago contrasts with the apparent evolutionary nature of Western political ethics. Many Muslims charge the West with hypocrisy and double standards because of this philosophical difference. Al Qaeda exploits this widespread belief in Western hypocrisy to allege that the West deliberately targets civilians and thereby indulges in state-sponsored terrorism. Consequently the West has no right to condemn Al Qaeda's acts of terror.

Al Qaeda employs a sanitised and selective view of history to create a memory of a utopian past, to interpret the present and provide a vision for the future. Its version of history is contained only in the abstract world of narrative, where it can be more easily manipulated. In common with its Salafi antecedents, Al Qaeda purports to emulate the original Muslims. Paradoxically, its ideologues selectively adopt jihadi concepts from medieval theologians and the colonial and postcolonial revolutionary ideologues of the 20th Century. It has consequently absorbed many ideas about politics and violence from modern sources rather than from the origins of Islam.

Role of 'Selective' History in Al Qaeda's Ideology

Al Qaeda, in common with other religious terrorist organizations, advocates a vision based on recreating an imagined past. The Golden Age of Islam as a 'salvation history' for Muslims is Al Qaeda's primary reference point for its conception of society and politics. Mythical ideas of *hijra* (exile), jihad and triumph of the weak over superpowers are the primary features of a selective past created by Jihadi Islamists. These myths underpin Al Qaeda's justification for the use of force not only in defence but also to regain 'lost territory' and bring salvation to the world.

The Crusades are the most prevalent example of a historic conflict with non-Muslims exploited by Al Qaeda. The impact of the Crusades in Islamic history allows the Crusader label to create the idea of an aggression against Islam and to portray the West in a negative light. The label also helps to paint current political crises as the continuation of the 'eternal conflict' in order to invite a united Muslim defence against alleged Western aggression.

Al Qaeda's Ideological Inheritance

Al Qaeda's ideology contains a mixture of both fundamentalist and rationalist thought. The failure of modernity in Muslim society, especially the failure of experiments with

Western political systems in Muslim countries, meant that radical fundamentalism become an alluring alternative and Al Qaeda has attempted to dominate this philosophical genre. Islamism emerged in part as a response to the failure of modernity and in part as a reaction to orientalists' negative and exploitative approach to the Muslim world. Muslim societies have to some degree absorbed and developed an occidentalist outlook, which particularly decries Western politics and culture because of its intrusion into Muslim life. Islamists have been especially sensitive to these ideas and their anti-Western ideology, targeting Western cultural and political behaviour is highly occidentalist. Despite this, Islamists have adopted many fundamental political and philosophical ideas from the West, primarily from Marxism and fascism. These Islamist ideas have been absorbed into offshoots such as Al Qaeda. At the same time, Al Qaeda developed exaggerated assumptions about the West's strategic weakness, specifically its ability to absorb casualties and economic loss in conflicts that threaten it on home soil.

Political and Social Crisis, Extremism and Myth

Crises, Extremism, Dignity and Humiliation

Social and political crisis can create an extreme religious or political ideology when a perception of injustice that threatens human dignity arises during such episodes. A new ideology or religious interpretation with claims of superiority can be the response to the resulting humiliation. That new ideology has to be authentic, provide better social and political justice and offer ultimate salvation and victory. All of these claims can be at odds with prevailing truths; often they are based on fundamental and extreme ideas, making them by definition mythical. In the development of Islamism, as in the development of the DRC and Hindutva ideology these mechanisms are evident in the emergence of extreme variants within a broader religious tradition. In religion-based ideologies, scriptural justifications play a crucial role in framing the new order, in defending against criticism and in providing an ethical framework for political violence.

Islamism and Crises

Islamism arose in response to the political, social and theological threat posed by Western Imperialism's almost universal political subjugation of Muslim peoples. The threat could most easily be understood theologically as a divine punishment for straying from the 'straight path' of Islam. Revivalist movements emerged to re-establish society

on that path. Many of them raised the banner of jihad as a primary means of doing so, an idea that was partly encouraged by Christian critics of Islam. Towards the end of Western imperialism, a political crises emerged in the West too that created new alternative political ideologies, what Voegelin called 'political religions.' It was into this marketplace of political theories that Maududi contributed his ideology of modern Islamism, based on the claim that Islam was primarily a political doctrine and provided superior alternatives to Western political systems. Hasan al Banna also developed similar ideas and the two Islamist movements these men created shared their ideological myths. Both movements produced the radical off-shoots from which evolved Al Qaeda during the international crises at the end of the last century.

Myths: Path, Sovereignty and Jihad

By combining the generally prevalent myth that political success is linked to the 'straight path' and an old and extreme myth that 'sovereignty belongs to God' Maududi made the case for absolutism; that Islamism was the only solution for mankind, alternatives had to be fought, as well as a case for activism against the status quo. He further harnessed the already politicised idea of jihad to provide ethical justification for political violence.

Maududi's idea that 'sovereignty belongs to God,' or *hakimiyya,* became an increasingly attractive alternative to the universality of misrule, ineptitude and repression experienced by Muslims at the hands of their governments during the post colonial phase. Their despotism contradicted the explicit stress placed by Islam on social justice. Sayyid Qutb was the most prominent Islamist ideologues to respond to feelings of indignation and humiliation during that phase by linking misrule of 'moderate' Muslim regimes to Western influences and presenting a violent form of Islamism as a panacea. These myths form the foundation of all Islamist extremist ideologies, including Al Qaeda's; the myths were actualised during the successful war against the Soviets in Afghanistan where many Al Qaeda founder members were emboldened by 'exercising power synergistically with God.'

Myths: Unity, Absolutism and Determinism through Tawheed

Islamism's absolutist political tendencies can be traced to its particular interpretation of the core Islamic theological principle of *tawheed*, or absolute monotheism. *Tawheed's*

singular conception of God is used to advance the myth of a singular political system, observed by the myth of a singular Islamic community (the *ummah*), living under a future mythical singular regime (an Emirate or Caliphate) and abiding by the myth of a singular law (*sharia*).   *Tawheed* is also used to contrast the Islamists' myth of a divinely ordained utopia with the evident imperfections of a man-made Western political system. This interpretation of *tawheed* is the theological glue that binds Islamists from the Salafi tradition with those from the Deobandi, despite other theological differences. This link is most clearly evident in the political alliance between Al Qaeda and the Taliban.

Islamism has evolved a grand myth of a sort of theological determinism. It promises that only through the establishment of a 'pure' political system, will emerge the righteous society. This contrasts with the view of many non-Islamist Muslims who argue that a pure social and political order will only emerge after society develops elevated levels of righteousness. The former relies on political violence to achieve its aims, the latter on peaceful persuasion. Hence there is an emphasis on theological and philosophical justifications for political violence in Islamist discourse. Nowhere are these beliefs in theological determinism more strong and the emphasis on political violence so great than in Al Qaeda's ideology.

Supporting Myths: Loyalty and Disavowal – The Myth of Separation

Islamist extremists employ a number of supporting theological myths, the most powerful of which is the myth of 'loyalty and disavowal.' This is used to enforce a Manichean view of the world. Because it is easier to eradicate bad than to spread good, extremist ideology stresses the evils of 'non-believers' but offers little in the way of a positive image of their alternative future.

Abdullah Azzam was encouraged by the Iranian revolution and the defeat of the Soviets in Afghanistan to introduce a geographical component to the concept of jihad by declaring it a duty to recover any land that was once ruled by Muslims. His ideas were believed to have had tacit approval of the Saudi religious establishment and young Saudis like Bin Laden were indoctrinated with them at university.   In the case of Saudi Arabia, separation had been given a special significance through the myth of exclusion of non-believers from the Arabian Peninsula. It was the apparent contradiction of this belief with the stationing of Western forces on Saudi soil during the 1990s that affected

bin Laden and drove him to act against the King and eventually declare war on the West. These instances demonstrate how theological ideas are interpreted to underpin political ideas about friend and foe and about territorial integrity.

Al Qaeda's Particular Ideological Development

The most original and influential Al Qaeda myth is that the mujahedeen defeated the world's greatest superpower in Afghanistan. Emboldened by this myth, Al Qaeda believed that it could and would defeat the USA and its Western allies. But it was other events that confirmed Islamist extremist myths and provided the impetus for Al Qaeda to come into existence.

The Muslim world's apparent impotence in reacting to the invasion of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein, despite the huge amount it spent on weapons, confirmed that the myth of defeating a superpower was grounded in faith rather than in temporal political power. Saudi Arabia's payment of the costs of the coalition action against Saddam and the continuing stationing of non-Muslim Western forces on Saudi soil further confirmed the Islamist extremist narrative that most Muslim regimes were apostate and stooges through whom the West exploited Muslims. It was at this point that Al Qaeda came into being as an idea. Its myth of past jihadi success sustains the belief in a future victory over the West and the continuing evidence of Muslim regimes' impotence, corruption and subjugation by the West strengthened Al Qaeda's case for action to overthrow the contemporary world order.

Al Qaeda's Strategic Development

Al Qaeda's strategy was constructed in response to political events that unfolded since the 1980s. The fall of the Soviet's client regime in Kabul following the fall of the Soviet Union, led bin Laden to reverse the Islamist extremists' strategic priorities to attacking the 'far' enemy (the West) first in order to defeat the 'near' enemy (Muslim 'apostate' regimes). This reversal of strategy along with the myth of jihadi superiority over superpowers were the driving factors behind bin Laden's declaration of war on the West and the creation of the Global Jihad movement headed by Al Qaeda. Spectacular and synchronised terrorist attacks against US targets, were driven by the belief that the USA lacked the will to absorb casualties. That belief proved to be false and the West's 'War

on Terror' required Al Qaeda to amend its coercive strategy. The USA's subsequent interventionist approach through invasions and operations in a number of Muslim countries served to reinforce the myth of 'eternal conflict' between the West and Islam. The resulting insurgencies provided Al Qaeda with an alternative methodology in combating the West. It adopted a parasitic approach by framing otherwise local or regional conflicts as part of its global jihad. Al Qaeda's main effort is therefore propaganda based and its strategy now relies on 'parasitic' insurgencies exhausting the West through depletion of its political, military and economic capital.

In the meantime, Al Qaeda uses sporadic acts of terrorism on Western soil or against Western interests in Muslim countries in order to remain relevant to the global jihad. Its operations are aimed at adding to the political and economic pressure on the West to hasten its decision to disengage from the Muslim world and particularly from its support for Israel. Military operations against Al Qaeda since 2005 depleted much of its capability to plan and mount operations against the West. Consequently, it has relied more on acts of terrorism planned and conducted by individuals or groups that have no contact with Al Qaeda but have been inspired by its ideology. This need to inspire and inform would-be terrorists as well as the dependency on propaganda in its 'parasitic' insurgency strategy places a greater reliance on its rhetorical ability.

Debates, Types, Characteristics and Nature

Rhetoric's Negative Connotations

Al Qaeda's rhetoric, particularly bin Laden's, is highly effective in certain audiences because for them it seizes "the mood" and acts as a "great interpreter" of major events. For such audiences, as in the West, overt reference to rhetoric can have negative connotations. Fundamentalist or literalist traditions in Islam are critical of rhetoric as they regard it as argumentation divorced from theology. Abundance of scriptural references in Al Qaeda's statements aims to avoid that pitfall. Where purely reasoned or political argumentation is offered it can be cast as a 'religious' obligation under the Qur'anic injunction to "*enjoin good and forbid evil*" in the world.

Employment of Classical Rhetorical Techniques

Judicial rhetoric is mostly employed in messages dealing with international relations subjects, especially those directed at the West. When addressing Muslim societies Al Qaeda tends to use deliberative rhetorical styles, exploiting the emotions of fear, patriotism and pride. Deliberative rhetoric is also used on rare occasions in statements directed at the West primarily to drive a wedge between their public and their governments. Demonstrative rhetoric is restricted to eulogies for martyrs because of Al Qaeda's inability to hold public ceremonies and rituals. In those situations demonstrative rhetoric is usually combined with the other styles to maximise effect. All of Al Qaeda's rhetorical techniques, styles and actions are ultimately directed at persuasion. It has achieved success in inciting various terrorist actions throughout the world in support of its ideology. It has been considerably less successful in persuading its adversaries to give in to its demands.

Al Qaeda and its Audience – The West

Al Qaeda's failure to shift Western public opinion prompted it to target black Americans. But its view of American society is outdated. That view was informed by the black power struggles of the 1960s leading Al Qaeda to believe black society in the USA harboured feelings of alienation and disenfranchisement which would help them identify with its reactionary worldview. The election of the USA's first black President was the most obvious indication of Al Qaeda's misperceptions about US social and political culture. Vitriolic attacks on the President and his outreach to the Muslim world indicated both an irritation over Al Qaeda's failed tactic as well as a concern that a basis for its Manichean and separatist views could be weakened. Al Qaeda achieved no noticeable advantage through its attempts to create racial disunity in US society. The few converts to its cause that subsequently emerged were in mostly white.

Al Qaeda and its Audience – The Muslims

When addressing Muslims, Al Qaeda's rhetoric aims to achieve persuasion through establishing an ethical stance rather than through purely political argument. Its ethical stance is established by discrediting the morality and ethics of the West rather than by presenting the superior arguments of its own ethical doctrine. Instead, Al Qaeda aims to

achieve a degree of ethical and ideological superiority through a clear and forthright rhetorical style. It avoids double meanings or vague statements because those would weaken its claims to be delivering fact and truth.

However, the Palestinian issue presents a conundrum where it needs to hide its motives through implicit messages. Al Qaeda desperately needs to champion the Palestinian cause in order to bolster its aim of being the protector of Muslims and a vanguard of the struggle against the West. HAMAS being an Islamist jihadi organisation but which does not support Al Qaeda's global jihad presents a problem. Furthermore, HAMAS' willingness to negotiate with Israel and Western interlocutors, albeit under strict conditions, is an anathema to Al Qaeda. Its rhetoric aimed at Palestinians treads a careful path between attempting to seduce Palestinians to its global Jihadi cause, being seen as contributing to the Palestinian struggle and avoiding being seen as spreading discord through criticism of HAMAS. The rhetorical challenge of Palestine mirrors the ideological and political challenge it poses to Al Qaeda – the difficulty of demonstrating leadership and success when HAMAS actually controls the 'jihadi' struggle.

Interactive Rhetoric

Al Qaeda's rhetoric is both active and interactive. A number of statements and fatwas during the 1990s set the agenda for its rhetorical conflict with the West culminating in a declaration of war on the West. It subsequently demonstrated its ability to react to and interpret world events to support its narrative of grievances and its allegations of Western hostility towards Islam. Al Qaeda's desire to interact swiftly to world events has led to some of its most obvious rhetorical mistakes. For example the 2006 Israeli invasion of Lebanon led to ambiguous and contradictory statements where Al Qaeda's rhetoric appeared most empty of substance. The interactive nature of its rhetoric and its impact on forcing changes to Al Qaeda's ideological justifications is witnessed by the reaction to the Amman hotel bombings. The incident provoked severe and sustained criticism from the Arab Muslim world. Al Qaeda was forced to respond with restrictions in its use of use of violence against Muslim civilians.

Rhetoric and Strategy

Al Qaeda's rhetoric is closely linked to its ideological strategy, the first phase of which was the 'awakening' of the *ummah*. That awakening was only partially achieved and is

now reinforced by linking into the common feelings of alienation, disenfranchisement and anger among Muslims worldwide. The primary aim is to depict the audiences' individual political and personal struggles as religious battle against state actors, principally the United States and Israel. The primacy of the far enemy over the near enemy is Al Qaeda's most original contribution to Jihadi strategy. It is the best example of Al Qaeda's ability to shift perceptions through rhetoric to create a significant following focussed against the West rather than on local struggles.

Symbolism, Argumentation, Audience and Debate

Limits of Symbolism and Reflective Rhetoric

Al Qaeda's actions are primarily rhetorical acts aimed at coercion. They are constructed to be ethically and rhetorically reflective of its adversaries. Al Qaeda claims that the West indulges in terrorism and so Al Qaeda too must do like-wise. To compensate for the advantage the West has in its ability to kill Muslims; Al Qaeda's terrorism has to be as horrific as possible to be 'reflective' of its enemy's actions. It is the reason that bin Laden, almost uniquely amongst terrorists, accepts the adjective of terrorist for himself and his movement. Al Qaeda's actions are, therefore, 'speech acts' making a political statement as well as claiming moral equivalence. Those messages, however, appear not to have been understood. Despite being accompanied by elaborate textual or verbal explanations, Al Qaeda's symbolic actions fail to convince its Western audience that its violence and ethics are mere reflections of Western violence.

Argumentation – Theories Inapplicable but Myths presented as Grievances

Critical analysis of Al Qaeda's arguments using 'analytical' theories is problematic because they mostly rely on a presumption of validity and on impartial judgement. These theories further require arguments to comprise particular components such as 'premise' and 'evidence,' which do not always exist. While Al Qaeda's message is better considered as 'substantial' arguments 'historically situated' and based on the 'evidence of experience,' differences in conceptions of history and experiences between Al Qaeda and the West make an objective assessment difficult. Acceptance of the 'other's' claims on face value is further complicated by the tendency for communities to learn to distrust each other. Consequently, Al Qaeda has more success with Muslim communities with whom it shares conceptions of history and political grievances than with the West.

Al Qaeda's arguments are most easily analysed as myths within a political narrative that presents a selective version of history, contemporary reality and an ill-defined utopian future. The grievance-based elements of the narrative reflect the political and social failure experienced by many Muslims. The promise of an Islamist political solution has the advantage of not having so far demonstrated failure, unlike the alternatives of socialist, nationalist and secular options attempted in Muslim countries. The narrative contains recurring components which: highlight the contemporary crisis, present it as part of a perpetual conflict between Muslims and disbelievers, stress the urgent need for action, declare it to be a religious obligation providing the primary route to personal salvation and one which is underwritten by God's promise of ultimate success. As such, Al Qaeda's rhetoric is a fusion of specific versions of history, political analysis and theological interpretation, the bulk of which is encapsulated in myths and presented in the form of a 'rational' debate.

Role of Scripture and Authority in Argumentation

Al Qaeda's statements can be dismissed as "rants" and "hate speech" in the West because they are sometimes rooted in the alien style of the Arab *fatwa* tradition to give the impression of legal and rational authority. Such statements usually begin with a scriptural quotation to establish religious authority before addressing pre-stated questions. Violence against the West is a frequent topic and is explained in reflective action; "*we fight you because you attack us.*" Tactical decisions are ethically justified by the right of reciprocity and challenging the concepts of 'civilian' and of the 'innocent.' When Al Qaeda attempts to pass off cases based on the ethics of 'strategic necessity' as theological obligation, its arguments are vulnerable to attack.

Al Qaeda's invitation for the West to accept Islam to save itself from the sins of injustices, moral bankruptcy and hypocrisy is intended to placate Islamists who feel it wrong to attack an enemy without first warning it and inviting it to accept Islam. Al Qaeda makes no serious attempt to persuade the West to accept Islam because the rejection it anticipates strengthens its case for violent conflict.

Al Qaeda sees debate as 'a battle of ideas' in which the substantive elements of an argument are rarely addressed. Instead, the number and reputation of the theologians cited by a particular side of the argument is considered the most persuasive factor. In

such situation the theological premise is rarely in dispute but it is the application of that premise in the particular conditions or environment where points of difference arise. Hence extremist ideologues argue less about the legitimacy of jihad against the West, in what is essentially a political rather than religious conflict, but more about where the West can be attacked and who can authorise such action.

The absence of recognised religious authority in the Muslim world allows Al Qaeda to selectively quote sources when they accord with its views while rejecting statements by the same individuals when they do not. Its most powerful technique is to cite the authority of scripture where it invariably finds text it can selectively use to support its case.

Measuring Impact

Measuring Al Qaeda's impact on its audience through quantitative methods such as citation analysis is misleading. Its ideology is action orientated and so it exploits rather than creates theoretical material. Its most significant original contribution to extremist jihadi ideology has been the idea of attacking the far enemy and the resulting concept of the global jihad. The rhetorical success in communicating these ideas is best assessed through the impact on world politics since Al Qaeda first postulated them. It now has affiliates that share the global jihad in the Maghreb, the Arabian Peninsula and Iraq. Formerly nationalist groups in Somalia (al-Shabaab), Pakistan (Lashkar-e-Taiba), the Afghanistan Taliban and others in the Far East now see their causes as intrinsically tied to Al Qaeda's vision of a global jihad. These successes have been achieved in part by understanding the audience in these regions. Al Qaeda's failure to mobilise particular audiences within Western society, however, indicate its poor understanding of Western audiences. Its failures are also intrinsic to its rhetorical strategy of creating disunity through Manichean views rather than unity around an attractive vision of the future.

Textuality and Political Style

Al Qaeda employs elements of the courtly, bureaucratic, republican and realist political styles. However, it is not fully encapsulated by any or even all of them. To get a fuller picture, the textuality of Al Qaeda and revolutionary terrorism was compared. These comparisons reveal that while Al Qaeda attempts to be egalitarian it has allowed the creation of sovereign-like personas in bin Laden and its host, Mullah Omar. It publicly

pays homage to Mullah Omar, as its ultimate commander, without in reality subjecting itself to his authority. Courtly rivalry amongst its members must exist for these reasons but evidence of this is hard to come by due to Al Qaeda's tight security.

Although a movement with totalitarian tendencies, Al Qaeda's scope to establish bureaucracies is limited by its lack of political power. However, Al Qaeda has strict bureaucratic control of security and accounting procedures, suggesting that its bureaucracy has been focused on areas crucial to its survival without constraining its ability to rapidly adapt to political and military situations.

The republican elements of Al Qaeda's political style are the most prominent of the conventional styles as evidenced in its desire for public debate and the value it attaches to oratory. The need to have its statements heard, taken seriously and remain in the public consciousness has led it to reinforce them with rhetorical acts of terrorism. Like all republicans it recognises the danger of interrupting its discourse because that would allow *"forces of change"* within and without the movement to *"gather strength"* as they would construe silence a sign of weakness. This need to continually communicate with its audience lest it become irrelevant, accounts for the continuous stream of textual, verbal, video and behavioural messages emanating from the movement. Serious concern to protect its reputation is another republican tendency aimed at preserving the credibility of its arguments. Consequently it is particularly sensitive and reactive to attacks from erstwhile friends. Al Qaeda departs from republicanism over the issue of negotiation. In that respect it has a Hegelian realist approach, regarding violence as the primary basis of sovereignty and negotiation as a mitigating power. Its absolutist commitment to a singular interpretation of religious law (*sharia*) makes compromise and negotiation seem a sign of both political and religious weakness.

Al Qaeda's political style is realist to the extent that it recognises its adversaries primarily in terms of their power and acts rhetorically to deplete that power with its own expression of power. However, its contempt for existing power structures places it within the revolutionary political style rather than the realist. Unlike realists who objectify rather than justify power, revolutionary movements like Al Qaeda need to express themselves through power as well as justify possessing it; they need to kill as

well as make a persuasive case for killing. As a revolutionary movement it relies far more on rhetoric than would a realist regime.

Al Qaeda confront its readers with the brutal reality of killing in order to prepare them to contemplate the act. It desensitises the readers' psychological aversion to killing by graphical descriptions of torture and death at the hands of the 'enemy' and gives examples of acts of terrorism to inspire retribution. Al Qaeda ideologues particularly stress killing when a degree of war weariness sets in. Textual imagery and mythical narratives are combined to suggest pacifism will cause further horror and to make killing an appealing necessity.

Al Qaeda's ideologues, like other revolutionary terrorists, are political philosophers. Their style sprouts in the soil of political and social failure and their rhetoric aims to reflect, and exaggerate for effect, the violence and 'immorality' of the crises that give birth to it. The terrorists' inability to conduct violence on a mass scale is compensated for by making their violence more horrific and this greater horror is reflected in the violent language of their texts. The relatively elaborate nature of Al Qaeda's ideological discourse serves to dilute the violent aspects of its textuality.

Bin Laden, Oratory and Poetry

Personality Influence

Bin Laden's credibility based on jihad in Afghanistan and charitable works won him acclaim within the Islamist community and contributed to his image as a pious warrior and leader. His worldview comprised a seamless link between religion, politics, war and geography. His piety was largely based on ritualistic behaviour rather than mystical spirituality.   A Manichean outlook influenced by the Saudi education system and direct exposure to primary Qutbian Islamist ideologues contributed to his self-confessed political awakening in response to the political crises in the Middle East.   The combination remarkable personal qualities, his early commitment to higher ideals and his subsequent selfless devotion to the cause of the underprivileged Muslim world underpinned his charismatic appeal.

Bin Laden's argumentation style of polemic mixed with rationality is strengthened by the ability to seamlessly linking various doctrines and simultaneously discussing

philosophical, grand strategic, strategic, operational and tactical issues. This also enables followers to think and act at all levels and is one of the reasons that individual terrorists continually strive to develop tactics that aim to impact the West at a strategic level. Bin Laden's exudes confidence, courage and self-belief through the persuasive calmness of his elegantly written Arabic statements. His poetry graphically articulates grievances and inspires violent emotions. Some of his poems and most of Al Qaeda's statements follow a structure intended to persuade through a mixture of narrative, myth and argumentation.

A Comparison of Rhetoric and Myth

A comparison between the rhetoric of Osama bin Laden and Menachem Begin reveals that both men explain crises as punishment for collective sin through revisionist myths about redemption. Begin's Zionist revision of the messianic myth promised redemption through return to the land of Israel and Bin Laden's Islamist revision promised redemption through the expulsion of foreign influence in Muslim lands. Both revisions adapted a theological myth into a political one. The new myths obliged the use of violence to achieve the supreme aim of collective redemption. Both political traditions are modern but both exploit ancient history to sustain their myths and to describe their respective utopias.

Acknowledged as powerful orators, differences in the styles of the two leaders reflect the differences in the crises experienced by their cultures. Begin did not need to explain the singular catastrophe of the Holocaust from which the Jews had recently emerged; he merely had to reflect in his speech the bitterness, indignation and anger of the Jews. Bin Laden had to catalogue a litany of grievances, which only constitute convincing evidence of a 'war on Islam' by the Crusaders and Zionists when presented collectively and rationally.

Neither leader acknowledges assistance from others in the progress of their movements because doing so would detract from the righteousness of their mission and the virtue of their followers. Begin accepted political conciliation and even avoided retaliating against fellow Zionists in the interest of the wider strategic aim of establishing a united Jewish homeland. Bin Laden resisted any ideological or political compromise and his rhetoric become increasingly uncompromising, alienating erstwhile sympathisers.

Zionism's identifies its followers racially enables it to accommodate the diversity of Jewish beliefs, making unity of purpose amongst Jews easier to achieve. Islamism defines its followers by belief and so becomes increasingly definite when challenged by diversity of interpretation. It responds by narrowing the definition of what constitutes Islam and a Muslim. This works against the universal mobilisation of a Muslim polity that Al Qaeda seeks to achieve. Zionism's territorial aims are limited while Al Qaeda's ambitions are global and poorly defined. The effect of this is to set Al Qaeda's political and military challenge on an imperial scale without it having the resources to achieve them. Consequently, it is forced to adopt an approach that depends upon the future failure of Western strategy rather than success based on its own capability.

Bin Laden faced a far greater strategic and rhetorical challenge than Begin because he had to articulate contested claims: that a single externally generated political and social crisis afflicts all Muslims and all Muslim territories, past and present have to be united under its version of Islamic law. These mythical claims are resolved, as myths often are, through other myths: the myth that a united body of 'true' Muslims exists and that Al Qaeda somehow has the authority to decide and act on its behalf. Al Qaeda's fundamental rhetorical failure so far has been to convincingly establish these myths amongst even Islamists let alone amongst the wider population of Muslims.

Challenges and Research Gaps

This study does not claim to be complete or perfect. Time and word limits have necessitated omissions of relevant areas of study, omissions of some counterpoints and brevity and generalisations in articulating findings. For example, there are many more myths deployed by Al Qaeda such as martyrdom and the caliphate, which have not been explored. The myths selected were chosen on the basis that they represented the most significant drivers of ideological thinking and those omitted were of second order influence.

The main vulnerability to criticism of this study is that detail and depth was sacrificed in favour of a broad approach. That would be a fair comment and one that can be defended by arguing that as ideology influences human behaviour on a psychological, sociological, political and theological level, it demands a multidisciplinary approach resulting in an eclectic mix of analytical methods. For these reasons, only two brief case studies could

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be considered to test the theory of extremism resulting from social and political crises. Also, only one individual, Begin, could be used to compare with bin Laden's rhetoric. Furthermore, this Thesis had both to postulate the theoretical frameworks used as well as to apply them, preventing a deeper discussion of either aspect of research.

This study has concentrated on Al Qaeda and how its ideology developed out of a broader Islamist ideology. It would be interesting and useful to investigate how Al Qaeda has impacted on that broader Islamist ideology from where it emerged. Certainly, there are signs that the extremism of Al Qaeda has pushed the broader Islamist movement towards a moderate position. If mainstream Islamist parties are likely to emerge with greater influence following the 'Arab Spring' then an understanding of their ideological trajectory would be useful.

The framework developed for ideological analysis of Al Qaeda should have wider application to other extremist movements. Given the occasional but horrific attacks by the more numerous right wing extremists in the West, a fuller appreciation of their, ideology based on their mythmaking and rhetoric would by useful and timely. As indicated within the Thesis, Al Qaeda's rhetoric was not recognised and accepted as credible before 9/11. Following the right wing extremist attacks in Oslo in July 2011, it would be wise to begin to start analysing those movements now in case they emerge as a more menacing threat in the future. Certainly, right wing rhetoric appears to have many of the same elements as Al Qaeda's except that it currently lacks the belief in victory that Al Qaeda's followers have but that could easily change.

Future of Al Qaeda's Ideology

Ideologies morph over time as they confront political reality. However, some wither either because they fail to deliver their core promises or because they lack the necessary flexibility to adapt to an evolving environment. Al Qaeda's core objective was to coerce the West into disengaging from the Muslim world so that 'apostate' Muslim regimes would be replaced with Islamist governments. Intrinsic to that objective was the claim that only the employment of jihadi violence or its threat could achieve it. If the revolutionary overthrow of undemocratic and oppressive Muslim regimes that began in February 2011 is successful in delivering competent representative governments then the process will deal a devastating blow to Al Qaeda's rationale. These uprisings were

largely internal, secular and employed non-violent means. Where violence occurred it was mostly employed by the regimes against defenceless civilians. The behaviour and success of the uprising will contrast with Al Qaeda's strategy of a violent global jihad that has failed to deliver meaningful political change. Furthermore its employment of jihadi violence risks mirroring the repressive regimes it sought to overthrow. All of this will mitigate future appeal to its ideology and is likely to cause fractures and disillusionment in its followers.

Revolutionary history indicates that most probably the uprisings will fail to deliver the prosperous and representative government that popular will demands. The initial euphoria of overthrowing a repressive order most frequently gives way to another form of repression as revolutionary elements jostle for power. This was the case in the French, Russian and Iranian revolutions. Under those circumstances, Al Qaeda is likely to stress that only a true Islamist government can deliver a just and effective order and will probably employ violence instability and civil war during which it can achieve power through an affiliate insurgency. The Islamist government solution will also be championed by Islamist parties such as the Muslim Brotherhood and so Al Qaeda will find it difficult to compete with a more pragmatic mass movement, forcing it to emphasise its essential difference; its uncompromising commitment to its view of Islamist politics and its belief in the spirituality of jihadi violence. Its ideological appeal will consequently recede with time as it fails to deliver meaningful political success, especially if during that time Muslim casualties continue to mount. Under those circumstances, Al Qaeda will be vulnerable to the charge that its ideology of violence has only resulted in the political and military weakening of the Muslim world.

In the unlikely event that Al Qaeda achieves political success through establishing an Islamist state, it will confront a major ideological challenge. It has closed virtually all doors to political negotiations or compromise with non-Muslims and so it will find the political accommodation necessary for international relations highly problematic. Furthermore, its non-compromising and singular approach to its vision of an Islamic theocracy will force it internally to adopt a totalitarian stance. It will be unable to contain the inevitable internal opposition without the use of repressive violence due to its inability to accept compromise on issues of political philosophy and law. Again, it will not be able to sustain its political successes without compromising its ideological

principles. The need for pragmatism and compromise will cause fissures in the movement, which, in the absence of a common enemy to unite against, will serve to fragment the ideology. That very act of ideological sectarianism will destroy the myth of unity and utopia that Al Qaeda's jihadi determinism promised.

The only hope for Al Qaeda making a convincing claim of success in the future would be if the West were to suffer a catastrophic economic or political collapse. Regardless if that collapse is precipitated by a natural disaster or by economic miscalculations, Al Qaeda will seek to present it as a consequence of its strategy to defeat the West by exhausting its political, military and economical capital. That will certainly embolden its followers but unless any collapse of Western power is clearly linked to one of the Al Qaeda supported insurgencies, it is unlikely that Al Qaeda's claims will have much traction with the wider public.

Under most foreseeable scenarios, therefore, Al Qaeda's ideology, as articulated by Bin Laden and other leaders, is doomed to failure because its objectives are unachievable and because it lacks the political flexibility to consolidate success. Furthermore, its strategic means, based on unrestrained violence, are unlikely to gaining popular support as they are ethically unacceptable to any significant population and because they have been increasingly ineffective.

Appendix to Chapter Seven

Bin Laden's Poetry and Statements

The Travail of a Child Who Has Left the Land of the Two Holy Shrines

"Father, where is the way out (of all our troubles)?
When are we to have a settled home?
Oh, father, do you not
See encircling danger?
Long have you made me travel, father,
Through deserts and through settle lands.....

How is it our house has vanished
From our sight, leaving no trace?
Why has my mother not returned?
How strange! Has she taken a taste to travel?
And my dear brother - may I be his ransom!
Time has passed and he does not appear.
Why in our area do we see
Nothing but parapets and pits?
Is it because America has come
Manipulating finds and media?

You, father, do not crave
An easy leaving from mankind.
It is eternity that awaits us
If God should will us to prevail.
Tell me, father, for I find
No brief, enlightening explanation."

"Forgive me, son, for I am struck
Both powerless and speechless.
My tongue is tied. My eyes are flowing springs.
My consciousness is hell.
What can I say when living in a world
Of contention and recklessness?
What can I utter to a world bereft
Of physical and moral vision,
Where nations are so bought and sold
In an inflationary and speculative trade?....

I have migrated westward
To a land where flows the Nile.
Of Khartoum I love the character,
But I was not permitted to reside.
So then I travelled eastward
Where there are men on radiant brows.
Kabul holds its head up high.
Despite the hardship and the danger.
Kabul, with a smiling face,

Offers all-comers shelter and help.
Sheikh Yunus there appears
A lion who strikes terror when he roars,
As, marked by manliness and pride,
Does our commander, Mullah Omar."

"Why, father, have they sent
These missiles, thick as rain,
Showing mercy neither to a child
Nor to a man sheltered by old age?
Father, what has happened
So we are pursued by perils?
Father, what has happened
So your images are on placards?
Is your redeeming of an ancient house
a crime that cannot be forgiven?
Here are we, (locked) in tragedy:
all safety gone - it does not show itself."

"It is a world of criminality, my son,
Where children are, like cattle, slaughtered.
Zion is murdering my brothers,
And the Arabs hold a Congress!
They are America's henchmen,
Blinded and devoid of vision.
(Nothing but) ink on paper. They neither
Are truthful, nor have they made a difference.
Why have they not equipped a force
To shield the little one from harm?
This, by your Lord, is a major band
of shame to be recorded,
A treachery being pieced together -
Is our defence to come from traitors?
I swear by God the Great
that I shall fight the infidel."[489]

[489] Translation published by New York Times, 7 April 02. (www.nytimes.com).

Following is a transcript of a radio program about Osama BinLaden's Poetry broadcast by CBS Radio. It starts with a short poem followed by an interview of Academic Flagg Miller (FM) CBS' Anna Maria Tremonti (AMT)

	Tomorrow, William, you'll discover Which young man will confront your brethren Who have been deceived by their own leaders a youth who plunges into the smoke of war smiling he hunches fourth sustaining the blades of lances red May God not let my eyes stray away from the most Eminent Humans should they fall, *jins* should they rise And lions of the jungle whose only fangs are their lances And short Indian swards As a stallion bares my witness that I hold them back By stabbing is like the cinders of fire that explode into flame On the day of the stallions' expulsion How the war cries attest to me As do stabbing, striking, pains and brooks
AMT	**Poem was found in rubble of his former compound in Kandahar. Flag Miller anthropologist at the University of California finds tremendous value in Bin Laden's poems. What is it about Osama bin Laden's poetry that you find interesting?**
FM	He evokes a lot of archaic metaphors about militant struggle taking place at the time of the 7th Century and afterwards a number of poems evoke the Crusades and I've had a lot of experience with poetry and contemporary verse and he puts a spin on it that's far more militant than I've encountered through my years of doing work amongst people in the region.
AMT	**More militant how so?**
FM	Well he'll consistently emphasize idioms of conventional combat and hand to hand combat you know spears are used and he frequently cites the companions of the Prophet and their struggle and its often bending the stuff to appeal to support for jihad in Afghanistan and further afield and in the Islamic world and to do so he kind of ends up evoking these very wild kind of fantastic scenarios in the poem that was just recited invokes men who are fighting alongside genies or jinn in Arabic alongside lions of the jungle a kind of metaphor for courageous manliness and it all to me it kinds of it sounded like Lord of the Rings a kind of fantastical supernatural human war going on and then but this was 8th, 9th Century Arabia rather than Iceland.
AMT	**So in your opinion is this good poetry?**
FM	It is good poetry. Um its kind of hard to swallow the fact kind of how would you know a terrorist militant find interest in poetry, do these folks have kind

	of an artistic interest and the fact is you know there in context in which their trying to invent a new language to mobilise people because the common conventions of warfare and global diplomacy don't favour their radicalism and so they have to come up with a new language and poetry is a way of doing that saying things that they wouldn't normally be able to say in other contexts.
AMT	**Where would he have recorded the poetry originally?**
FM	He would have recorded this, well that speech you just heard was in Tora Bora in Afghanistan there are a lot different contexts for this poetry he delivers them um sometimes embeds this poetry in formal speeches in Mosques and lot of its at training camps he's at and he's teaching people about the importance of combat and of kind of preparing themselves intellectually some of its at weddings he's a host at weddings.
AMT	**Really and like he would tell them stories and poems?**
FM	Yeah, you know he would be, there's one wedding at a bodyguard of his in 2000 and there's a lot of joking at the wedding and um you know one of the speakers steps up to the mike and says '*you know people call us people of the cave, you know they imagine us living in these isolated caves in these highlands of Afghanistan*' he said '*well that's part of our life but they never, they think of us as incredibly serious and burdened by the world*', he said '*they would never predict laughter and joking and but the fact is you know the young men are filled by a light hearted approach to for combat and their able to tell jokes and laugh and this is refreshing*' and so there's this kind of thing, lets have a little levity here in the midst of the war, and then bin Laden steps up and the speaker says well now we have Sheikh Osama whose here and he's an honoured guest and any questions for Sheik please step up and the first question for bin Laden is '*Sheikh bin Laden why are you attacking the United States first rather than Israel?*' So all of a sudden the wedding gets very serious and bin Laden steps in, so he's not the one joking but he's the one that can respond to these very explicit questions he says '*well you know Israel's important but the United States is really the bulwark of this fight and their behind Israel and the reason that it keeps going but hopefully we'll strike the heads off both snakes.*'
AMT	**So he was penning these poems as he went along and then recording them? Sounds like he recorded a lot of things.**
FM	He did he borrowed quite a bit also from other poets you know earlier poets he cites them sometimes the other times he adopts their verse and makes it his own.
AMT	**He plagiarizes?**
FM	Well you know T S Elliot said that the immature poet imitates and the mature poet steals, ok? this is not an uncommon practice for poets the idea of reading learning from previous poets and then re-voicing it with slight variations and making it your own.
AMT	**Take us back to how these tape recordings were recovered?**
FM	Well CNN was in Kandahar in 2001 in December when the Taliban fell and Mullah Omar fled out of town on a motorcycle and bin Laden you know was

	on his heels and shortly after that in the days that followed CNN acquired a range of video tapes and they used those for our first images of Al Qaeda's training camps at the time um and those the videos were from camps around Kandahar as well as in Kandahar and they also found these audio cassettes through a Kandahari family that was there the cassettes were in bin Laden's former house, over 1500 tapes and 98% of them are in Arabic, you know 20 of the tapes I found they are bin Laden - vast range of other tapes are the kinds of people he was listening to both supporters and critics, as he was crafting his platform leading up to September 11th and um so there is incredibly incredible resource you know it really the only personal library of his that's come to surface, the tapes were ultimately looked at by the FBI while they were with CNN, the FBI decided to decline stewardship you know why I don't know, I think they had their hands full months just after 9/11 with the potential emerging security threats these tapes were largely of historic value only and so they ended up CNN held onto them for a few years didn't know what to do with them ultimately they were passed onto Williams College, Williams Afghan Media Project that was doing work on Afghani Media and then they ended up at Yale.
AMT	**So it was because it was the audio tapes of poetry that it wasn't being what more heavily scrutinized? Like I'm just wondering if valuable intelligence can be garnered from his poetry as well as his speeches?**
FM	That question kind of raises the possibility of these coded messages that are being sent out to get word out to launch a certain attack at a certain time, I mean this is the kind of rationale that the Pentagon has used to resist to declassifying poetry from places like Guantanamo I think that argument is really unlikely poetry does say what cant be said but its not about the tactics of actual military or militant operations its far subtler, tapping into cultural values and the ways to contextualize current events in light of those so you know it depends on what kind of intelligence you're talking about. I think this collection does offer an immense amount to intelligence folks as well as scholars and public about the real story behind the emergence of Al Qaeda during those years.
AMT	**I want to play you another translation of a poem that bin Laden recited and recorded back in 1989 while he was in Saudi Arabia here it is.** *Heroes vent on slaughter* *How you rise* *Though rewards are scarce* *And us sacrificing for religion* *Such victory* *Victory for those bethrowed to God* *Their bodies bloodied with wounds* *Refusing to see their houses forsaken by wanton bargains* *Living, live* *May those who protect and sacrifice live long* **So there you go, Flag Miller that line 'victory for those betrowad to God, their bodies bloodied with wounds', how is a poem like that useful in understanding the psychic of bin Laden?**
FM	Well it's useful to see a kind of symbolic a vocabulary he draws upon, not unique to him I mean the idea of martyrs going to wedding celebrations right

	before their operations is one that's been talked about and explored in the videos, martyr videos and that being like their bethrowding themselves to God alone um and so the kind of symbol of them marriage the marriage ceremony normally the one that confirms the strongest of social bonds now being used to talk about the strongest of spiritual bonds in a radically a social context is one that bin Laden obviously finds inspiring and the question is you know how does he use this to new ends. What's interesting is this poem is embedded in a longer speech he's giving about Afghanistan and so he's trying to kind of pit, this is 1989 a good 5, 6 years before any public statements we have of bin Laden you know to date so these are earlier tapes from the 80's and they're really valuable for seeing his earlier career and what his values were.
AMT	**You know there are those who think its dangerous to translate and publish his words, we spoke with John Lenburg a poet and former writer and resident at Stanford University and he wasn't available for an interview today but there we have an email that he wrote to us and I'm going to read it to you he says** *"here are my concerns about publishing the poems much of bin Laden's poetry is propaganda, it aims to turn disaffected young men into radical Islamic fundamentalists. Isn't it dangerous to give that propaganda a wider audience"*? **He goes onto say,** *"also I worry that by presenting bin Laden as a poet Flag Millers risks romanticizing him adding to the myth that he's some sort of prophetic figure. Similarly by presenting bin Laden's beliefs as poetry I think Miller risks helping to legitimize them."* **That's the quote Flag Miller how do you respond to John Lenburg's concerns?**
FM	If I was going to be just translating his verse as it is and simply disseminating it I think he's right, um the fact is that I'm unpacking with these poems with a lot of notes, a lot of historical context in order to kind of show the ways in which he veers off course with the kind of established traditions of Muslim poetry. Much of my work to date, the last 15 years has been spent focusing on progressive Muslim poetry in Yemen bin Laden's ancestral homeland, so I am very interested in kind of mapping out how he veers off course and I think the way to do that is not simply to make bin Laden's language transparent in the sense that whatever we hear is exactly what he means and has the capability to carry out so often in War on Terror discourse we kind of hear a lot of quotes from the most extreme militants and we simply get these short sound bites from them about attacking the United States of America we lose a sense that those are actual performances that you know that people are kind of pretending to be far more threatening than they really can be, and I find it interesting that in so much of the translations of bin Laden's and others work the poetry is just dropped out altogether.
AMT	**Hmmn now Osama bin Laden isn't the only tyrant who has taken to artistic pursuits of Adolph Hitler had an affection for art and architecture, Radovan Karadzic who is now in the Hague facing charges for crimes against humanity for his role in the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia wrote and published poetry. Do you have any sense why such notorious people are drawn to art?**
FM	Well, they have trouble shaping the world into the view that they would like to see it and voicing and kind of creating a voice that could achieve that strange vision they have, of you know world transformation through violence.

	Um their poetry would suggest that they see there are some ethical comprises that aren't being dealt with there and so they turn to poetry in order to try and explain and defend those in a more personal voice. Many times they keep it to themselves until after their cause has failed or else they are in exile or so forth, and then when it comes out, it gives you a sense of how they were escapists as much as realists.
AMT	**Ultimately what role do you think poetry can play in communicating ideas that speeches or other traditional forms of political rhetoric cannot?**
FM	Poetry allows the performer to kind of live the myth in a way to kind of ostensibly be narrating the myth as if they are the myth makers rather than the myth narrators and in that sense there's a power I think to poetry that a suddenly sweeps you up in its a tail wind with its rhymes and suddenly you feel very close and embodied.
AMT	**Its fascinating, thank you for your insights today. Flag Miller is an anthropologist at the University of California at Davis he is working on a book about Osama BinLaden's poetry.**
	Well Osama bin Laden is not the only infamous person to dabble in creative writing Joseph Stalin wrote poetry, Saddam Hussein wrote elaborate novels and the Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic published poetry even while he was hiding from the people who wanted to take him to the International Criminal Courts, here is a translated excerpt from Radovan Karadzics' poem, 'Goodbye Assassins'.
	Goodbye Assassins The boundaries between the worlds are trampled Instead of the heart a hornet drones in vain History turned its back on us What should one shoot at? Like an octopus the age hides its vertebrae And the Winter approaches With white drifts
	Radovan Karadzic is now behind bars and awaiting trial for war crimes he is alleged to have committed during the War in Bosnia Jay Surdukowski is a lawyer who worked in the Hague on the prosecution of the former Yugoslav leader Slobodan Milosevic among others he is a poet and he says poetry can and should be used as evidence in courts of law he wrote an article called 'Is poetry a war crime? Reckoning for Radovan Karadzic the Poet Warrior' it was published in the Michigan Journal of International Law. Jay Surdukowski is in Concorde New Hampshire today.
	Good morning, why do you think such people are drawn to creating poetry?
JS	I think that in a way its about cornering the market on myths um in the former Yugoslavia everybody grows up with the old mythic poems about battles and in some ways I think that Karadzic wanted to use what he was already given, he already had a stock of images to put he had the deck of cards that every school child grew up with and I think that he was able to

	deploy that very effectively he would even then would exploit them his very name Karadzic as the maker of myths Booth Karadzic of the 19th Century was his name sake and he would pretend to be related to Booth Karadzic when he would give interviews and such even talking about resemblance between their chins so he just used it as a means of propaganda I think.
AMT	**Yeah, and there really was a rich literal history in the former Yugoslavia Republics that he could draw on, was there not? What made you want to study his poetry?**
JS	Well I worked at the Hague both my Law School Summers and the first Summer I was there I happened upon I think it was a front line clip online of Karadzic and he is actually speaking in English in this clip its a polish documentary film maker was filming Karadzic and Eduar Liminoff who was a Russian poet, there they are reading poetry to each other, and I think that's well and good and Karadzic is reading a rather ominous poem that he wrote about the destruction of Sarajevo and army of trees burning down the city and then before my very eyes I realize that Liminoff proceeds to fire a high powered cyber rifle into an apartment building um and it was just a shocking marriage of both the rhetoric the propaganda of poetry and actual violence and I think that's the most interesting thing I think that Flag just said in his interview this notion of living the myth and here we had not just propaganda but propaganda followed within seconds by an actual act of violence, the disposition and the siege of Sarajevo and I thought I need to write about this
AMT	**Hmmn and you think then, this is why you think this can be used as evidence I guess?**
JS	Yes I think that, I think there's definitely a predictive quality you know genocide is a very hard crime to prove I, you basically have to show an intent to kill an entire people and the Tribunal, especially the Tribunal for Rwanda has been very good about bringing in not just you know peoples' statements in a parliament lets say but also political cartoons, um radio shows, all manner of manifestos has been brought in and I think that poetry can be no different especially when you have Karadzic saying that his own poetry was a prophecy or prediction, um usually you know poets will cringe when people confuse the speaker and a poem with a poet but I think that you get over that elementary rule when you have the poet and the poet warrior himself saying 'you know I spent 23 years writing these poems talking about going down into the city to kill the scum to kill the Muslims' then you know that's very interesting and I think that says a lot and you can sort of break down the traditional bifurcation between the speaker and the poet.
AMT	**Now some people might argue that entering literature or poetry into a courtroom would be a dangerous practice. Is there an inherent risk in using creative writing as evidence?**
JS	I think there absolutely is, I think it should only be in the rarest of instances, where there is this blurring of the lines between words and actions. I think you know of all the things that happened in the war with poetry and Karadzic I would be very limited in what I brought in. I would bring in which they already have done the footage on the mountain, they read that out, or they played that during the indictment phase. I'd also bring in evidence of epic poems being used to incite the troops to battle and the troops sort of singing these poems before going down and committing acts very violent acts, I

	would bring in those very limited instances where there was a true and close connection between the poetry and the act.
AMT	**And that speaks to the power of poetry as a propaganda tool too then?**
JS	Absolutely.
AMT	**Hmmn, well in your view then how much can a person's poetry reveal about their mind?**
JS	Um, I think it can be very revealing, again I think you have to be careful a poet is often making aah making things up to put it plainly you know you cant confuse the speaker with the poet usually but again I think where you've got the poet actually saying you know this is, this is prophecy you know I wrote for years what I wanted to do to Sarajevo, I wanted to strangle the city, I wanted to besiege it for 44 months, you know I wanted 12000 people to die, and he wrote things like that I think it is very revealing, but I think there are other cases where you can't so easily you know look at a poem and indict the persons' mind, I think that's a very very dangerous thing to do but its only in these instances where there's sort of an admission that what I wrote is true confession of what I feel and what I believe.
AMT	**Fascinating and a really interesting way to look at some of these things that are coming into light now. Jay Surdukowski thanks for speaking with me this morning.**
JS	Thank you.
AMT	**Jay Surdukowski is a lawyer and a poet we reached him in Concorde, New Hampshire.**

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